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THE AUSTRALIAN

# Garden Journal

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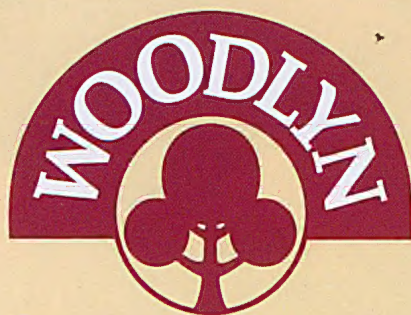
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**Editor**

**TIM NORTH**

**Art, Circulation and  
Subscriptions**

**ANN FOGARTY**

**National Advertising Director**

**KEVA NORTH**

**Advertising, Victoria and South  
Australia**

**Lesley de Meyrick,  
17 Hampden Rd,  
Armadale, Vic 3143  
(03) 509.4484**

**Editorial Advisory Board**

**Margaret Barrett**

**Tom Garnett**

**Dr Brian Morley**

**Trevor Nottle**

**John Patrick**

**Professor George Seddon**

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# Garden Journal

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*Front cover: Wildflower meadow mix — Flanders poppies and Cornflowers  
(see article on page 28); photo by Diggers Seeds*



## In Our Next Issue —

- Bruce Knight writes about South African bulbs that were in cultivation in and around Sydney in 1850;
- Gail Thomas on "Days of Wine and Roses";
- Lorrie Lawrence on the garden at Stephanie's Restaurant in Melbourne;
- Jane Edmanson on the garden of an emigrant Italian couple in Victoria's Western District that overflows with fruit and vegetables;
- Stephen Ryan with more "Plant Profiles";

*plus*

- another extract from Suzanne Price's forthcoming book, this time on "the Urban Woodland";

*and*

- "a storyteller's dream come true, of a castle, dragons, even a sleeping beauty to be rescued by knights and fair ladies". The castle is Casa Loma, long a visitor's mecca in the heart of Toronto, Canada, and the story has been specially written for *The Australian Garden Journal* by members of The Garden Club of Toronto.

*and, of course,*

- the usual book reviews, "Garden Cuttings"

*and more —*

all in the December/January  
issue of

*THE AUSTRALIAN  
GARDEN JOURNAL*

on sale approximately  
30th November 1991.

# The New & the Old

**T**he art of gardening over the past hundred years or so has been, on the whole, imitative rather than innovative. Most gardeners have been, and still are, content to be trend followers rather than trend setters. The "cottage garden" fashion, which shows no signs of waning, is a good example.

It says much for the persistence of Anglo Saxon traditions that, among the true innovators of the past hundred years, William Robinson is better known to most Australian gardeners than the far more talented Roberto Burle Marx.

But are we about to feel a new wave of garden design from America? Those who attended the Garden Design Conference in Melbourne in 1989 can hardly fail to have been impressed by the work of James van Sweden, even the avant-garde creations of Martha Schwartz. Books like Ken Druse's "The Natural Garden" and van Sweden and Oehme's own "Bold Romantic Gardens" are inspirational.

So it is fitting that we should start our second decade by taking a look at just one aspect of this new approach to garden making, the Wildflower Meadow Garden. Just how easily this will translate to Australian conditions perhaps still remains to be seen; some concern has already been expressed about the possibility of "escapees" and of fire hazards. But the concept of wildflower gardens is already on our doorstep.

As we look forward we also need to look back. For, as Hilaire Belloc once wrote,

"History, once a man has begun to know it, becomes a necessary food for the mind, without which it cannot sustain its new dimension. It is an aggregate of universal experience; nor, other things being equal, is any man's judgment so thin and weak as the judgment of a man who knows nothing of the past"

This is why we will continue to maintain a balance between the new and the old, and from time to time look back at historic gardens, both in this country and elsewhere, and see what has happened, may happen or may not happen, to them. In this issue Tom Crossen looks at the garden that is closely connected with Australia's oldest brewery. In our next issue there will be an article, especially written for us by members of the Garden Club of Toronto, about the \$1.5 million restoration of a famous garden in the heart of that city.

**TIM NORTH**

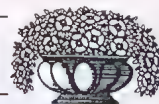
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## PROFILES



SUZANNE PRICE (Suz) for 12 years had a small wholesale nursery specialising in rare, choice and dwarf bulbs, many of which she has imported. As an innovative garden designer she has designed, and in some cases constructed, gardens in her own district, in Melbourne and in Sydney. Suz has more than 50 published articles to her credit, covering a wide range of horticultural topics. She is the author of "The Urban Woodland", and is currently completing her second book, as well as working on a third.

She is also, with her husband Jack, busy creating a "home for horticulture" at Trehwella House in Daylesford; this will incorporate an expository garden; a retail nursery specialising in bulb species and early cultivars, woodland plants and heritage perennials; a

horticultural book room and art gallery, a school of horticulture, and a museum of gardening.

NANCY BECKHAM has been in practice for 10 years as a professional herbalist and naturopath. Her book "The Family Guide to Natural Therapies" has been published by Greenhouse Publications, and she has had a number of articles published on health and horticultural topics. She holds a Certificate in Horticulture from Ryde College of TAFE.

TOM CROSSEN is Director of Parks and Recreation for the City of Hobart.

BENJAMIN ISAACS MAIH is proprietor of Sydney Horticultural Supplies, of Alexandria.



***Garden  
cuttings***

a monthly newsletter for the discerning gardener

Vol. 1 : No. 1

October 1981

Our first issue

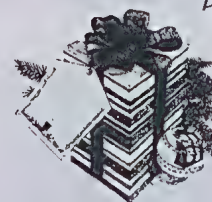
## October 1981 — October 1991 *Celebrating Ten Years!*

**This is how it started** — "Garden Cuttings" was first published in October 1981, and became "The Australian Garden Journal" in June 1983. The two little men, apparently busy in their garden, however, stayed on for almost another six years. They came from Thomas Hill's "The Gardener's Labyrinth", the first popular gardening book in the English language, published in 1577 (re-issued by Oxford University Press in 1987).

An appropriate caption is this quotation from "A Hundred Good Points of Husbandrie" by Thomas Tusser, published just twenty years later:

"Through cunning with dibble, rake, mattock and spade,  
By line and by level, trim garden is made".

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# Wagga Wagga Botanic Gardens

(below) *C. japonica* 'Grand Slam'

(bottom) Chinese Stone Lantern, gift from  
the City of Kunming

## 1 - THE CAMELLIA GARDEN

The City of Wagga Wagga, as part of the Bicentennial Celebrations in 1988, and in conjunction with the Hume Branch of the Australian Camellia Research Society and the Wagga Wagga Quota Club, developed a garden devoted to Camellias and with a strong affinity with the Chinese City of Kunming. Kerry GEALE, Controller of Parks and Recreation Facilities for the City of Wagga Wagga, reports on this, and another separate Bicentennial project in the City's Botanic Gardens







(above) The Entrance Gate  
(left) Chinese Pavilion, also a gift from  
the City of Kunming

photos by courtesy of the  
Council of the City of Wagga Wagga

Both the Hume Branch of the Australian Camellia Research Society and the Wagga Wagga Quota Club had been interested in the development of a Camellia Garden for some years. Mr and Mrs Harold Fraser, from the Camellia Society, had visited China several times and had taken camellia plants to China to establish a Friendship Garden. They had also taken greetings from the Mayor of Wagga Wagga to the City of Kunming, and over the years the City of Wagga Wagga had developed an affinity with the City of Kunming, the home of the camellia. Consequently, when the Camellia Society, together with the Quota Club, suggested that the development of a Camellia Garden would be an appropriate Bicentennial project, this was enthusiastically supported by the City Council.

The Botanic Gardens was seen as a logical place to develop this garden, along with a number of other projects suggested for the Bicentenary. One of the aims of the Bicentenary was to encourage communication and closer contacts with overseas countries, and the Camellia Garden fitted extremely well into this.

## Construction

Construction of the garden began in 1985 and took three years to complete. The first plantings of camellias took place in August 1986.

The site chosen for the garden was immediately adjacent to Council's existing Botanic Gardens, on the lower slopes of what is known as Waillans Hill, which runs through the centre of Wagga Wagga. The Garden itself covers some 2.5 hectares and had an existing mature coverage of callitris and eucalyptus which have proved very successful in providing an over-story for the camellias.

The development of the site required construction of 200 metres of brick and rock retaining walls, with an average height of one metre. Behind these walls were placed substantial drainage systems and approximately 500 cubic metres of specially mixed soil was placed on top of the existing soil. Prior to this the ground level was well tined to enable the new soil to bind with the existing soil. This has proved to be an extremely good base for the camellias and is providing excellent drainage. The soil was specially mixed for the project and consisted of well rotted stable manure up to two years old, three years old leaf mould,

and sandy loam. These were mixed in the ratio of two leaf mould, two stable manure and one sandy loam. This was mixed off site, then delivered and placed in the appropriate areas.

Over 40 tonnes of rocks, the largest of which weighed over six tonnes, were brought onto the site to use both within the retaining walls, the gardens and the water feature.

A detailed water supply was provided and each individual plant is provided with a drip watering system.

The entire 2.5 hectare site has been provided with a six foot high chain mesh fence to ensure that the garden is fully secure after hours. This fence is unobtrusive as it incorporates a *Camellia sasanqua* hedge in some sections and espaliered sasanquas in others.

The garden is open daily from 7.30 am to 6.00 pm.

## Chinese features

From the commencement of the project it was decided that a central feature consisting of a Chinese-style pavilion should be provided as the link with the origin of the camellia. Some work was carried out and plans drawn up for this pavilion; during subsequent visits by members of Council and ➡



## Wagga Wagga Botanic Gardens, continued

citizens of Wagga Wagga to Kunming, the Kunming Government agreed to provide the City of Wagga Wagga with a Chinese pavilion as its gift to the Australian Bicentenary and to cement friendly relationships between the two cities. The City of Kunming is known as the City of Eternal Spring and the City of Wagga Wagga as the Garden City. There was, therefore, a natural bond between the two.

The Government of Kunming provided four persons to travel to Wagga Wagga. These were a stonemason, a carver, painter and the head of the construction team who designed the pavilion and water feature. The Kunming Government in total provided the City of Wagga Wagga with the magnificent Chinese pavilion, an entrance archway, stone lantern and a number of rocks to be used within the water feature next to the pavilion. The majority of material for this was shipped to Australia from China and this was an enormous task considering over 5,000 glazed tiles were used on the roof of one pavilion alone, and carved timbers, rocks and

lanterns were also included. The arrival of the material and that of the Chinese artisans occurred simultaneously, and construction of the pavilion began in the winter of 1988.

The pavilion, water feature, entrance archway and lantern took the four Chinese plus many Australian workers eight weeks to construct and proved to be an amazing joining of two cultures, as neither could speak the other's language. Most of the instruction was carried out through an interpreter, or simply by using sign language. The construction methods used by the Chinese were quite amazing to watch, and there is no doubt that the end result is a testament to Chinese craftsmanship. The pavilion now makes a very substantial focal point for the centre of the Camellia Garden.

Following the gift of this pavilion, the City of Wagga Wagga resolved to provide the City of Kunming with an Australian garden and playground, and in 1989 the writer had the opportunity of taking a group of Australian workers to China for a six week period in order to construct them.

There are a number of other features within the Camellia Garden, ranging from seats to bird baths to two

very ornate gates and a magnificent moon gate. These were all designed and constructed by Wagga people and were provided by various service clubs and individuals as their gifts to this Garden.

## The Camellias

Over 200 different camellias have been planted within the garden, all of them donated by various institutions and individuals. A substantial number were given by the late Len Hobbs of Melbourne. This substantial collection of mature plants enabled the garden to develop very quickly.

Species include *C. assmilis*, *C. chrysantha*, *C. sinensis*, *C. hiemalis*, *C. japonica*, *C. eticulata*, and *C. sasanqua*.

Many varieties of azalea, some small plantings of rhododendrons and a number of exotic trees such as magnolias, cherries and maples have also been included in the garden.

In Wagga's hot summers it is necessary to provide substantial and regular watering, hence the installation of the drip irrigation system to all plants. A regular fertilizing program is also undertaken, with all plants being fed three times a year, in August, November/December and March/April, with a mixture of blood

The tree chapel.





and bone and dolomite in the ratio of three to one. This is placed around the base of each tree and watered in with one handful per tree being the normal rate of application. As well, a leaf fertilizer spray is used once per month in the April to August/September period. This has proved extremely effective and beneficial with the plants making substantial growth with a very prolific flowering period.

All species so far grown in the garden have proved successful and have acclimatized well to the Wagga weather. *C. chrysanth* flowered for the first time in 1990 and while the specimen in the garden is slow to grow and needs constant care it is nonetheless surviving and hopefully over the years will become a feature.

Altogether, the development of the Wagga Wagga Camellia Garden has been an outstanding success and has encouraged many visitors to the Botanic Gardens.

### Ongoing success

The success of the Gardens can be directly attributed to the involvement at an early stage of the Hume Branch of the Camellia Research Society and the subsequent funding that was provided through various Bicentennial grants, community organisations and corporate sponsorship and the fact that there is an ongoing commitment from many groups throughout the City of Wagga Wagga to the maintenance and development of these gardens. It has provided a very tangible and long lasting recognition of the Australian Bicentenary and of Wagga Wagga's establishment of Sister City relationships with Kunming, in Yunnan Province, China. It was very exciting to see a garden become the focal point of two very different cultures whilst at the same time providing the City of Wagga Wagga with a substantial addition to its Botanic Gardens, both in the way of the built environment and of the plants provided. There is also no doubt that this garden development has heightened the knowledge of this beautiful plant for the home garden.

## 2 — THE TREE CHAPEL

**Also as part of the Bicentennial Celebrations in 1988 the Wagga Wagga Interchurch Council agreed to provide a Tree Chapel for the City of Wagga Wagga. It was decided that this chapel would be provided within the existing Botanic Gardens complex and a site was chosen on the side of a hill within the Gardens reports.**

The concept of the Tree Chapel was first developed by the Rev Campbell Egan who was at the time an alderman of the City Council, and the design was carried out by the Council staff.

The Tree Chapel is a bowl-shaped amphitheatre cut into the side of the hill and, during excavation work for the project, a layer of solid rock was uncovered which enabled the altar to be formed by the existing rock strata. This, together with a decision to use rough sawn timber, created a naturalistic atmosphere which blends in superbly with the surrounding bushland.

To enter the Chapel one has to cross a water course through a lynch gate and, on entering, the dominant feature is seen to be a large wooden cross and altar, made from River Red Gums. The Chapel has seating for approximately 100 people on rustic benches, again made of River Red Gums. A further 300 can be seated on the lawn area in the centre of the Chapel.


From the entrance circular paths have been laid on either side. These pass through groves of trees then to the upper level of the Chapel where, from behind the altar, a superb view of the western part of the city is gained.

The aim of the Tree Chapel was to provide an outdoor worship area and to surround this with trees relevant to the Bible. From the outset the trees were to be a feature of the Chapel and it was agreed that only those plants which had obvious Biblical significance would be planted. The Chapel was to be very simplistic and uncluttered, providing a place where people could worship and meditate within a garden setting. Each tree or grove of trees planted within the Chapel is provided with an explanatory plaque detailing its sig-

nificance and providing a Biblical reference.

Some plants used are: palms, to symbolize the entry of Christ into Jerusalem; olives, to symbolize the story of Christ's agony; willows, reminiscent of the lament in exile (Psalm 137). These, along with many others, were provided to the surrounds of the Chapel and are now reaching a stage where the concept of the Chapel is coming to reality and people can walk through groves of trees to view it.

Work on the Tree Chapel commenced in 1986 with the first plantings being made on 27th July that year. The Chapel was officially opened with a service of dedication on 21st October 1988. Since its completion it has had many uses, ranging from weddings and christenings to Scout and Guide services, and church services carried out by a number of religious denominations. The Chapel provides a haven within the Gardens and very rarely does one walk past it without finding someone using it as a place of peace and quiet, as was intended. It is floodlit at night and provided with power, enabling evening as well as daytime usage as well as music for many of the services. As it is a place of worship one of the conditions of use is that any wedding ceremonies conducted within it are carried out by a Minister of Religion.

The Tree Chapel is a very public symbol of the co-operation of all the Churches within the City of Wagga Wagga and the community, and is a lasting reminder of the Bicentenary, its significance increasing as it matures. It is an interesting example of the different landscaping concepts and principles that can be applied to displaying plants in a different light, and there is always considerable comment on the choice of plants and their relationship to the Bible. 





# *A Garden from Memories... in Sydney*

**Tim NORTH** talks to  
**Heather CANT**, who gardens  
on Sydney's North Shore

**When did you start making your garden, and did you start completely from scratch?**

We bought the property in April 1966 and started making a garden almost immediately. There was absolutely nothing here when we started so we did, in fact, start from scratch and knowing nothing about gardening. We did it the hard way, by trial and error.

**You have created is a true cottage garden style, yet you began in 1966 which was long before the cottage garden fashion started. Do you see yourself as a trendsetter?**

Not really, for the garden has evolved over the years and we didn't consciously aim for any particular garden style. It would have been the same if cacti gardens had been the rage.

**But you must have had some sort of model, some source of inspiration.**

I remember my grandmother's garden in England, which was a large, rather formal country house garden, and also the garden of a nanny we had when I was a child, and this was a real cottage garden. I remember many of the plants

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*"...we dug out tons of clay,  
then brought in a truckful  
of topsoil, and added  
masses of compost."*

---

---

which grew in these two gardens and these were the plants I wanted to grow in my own garden. The trouble was that, while I could remember clearly what they looked like, I had no idea of their names!

**Did you have to do much preparatory work, soil improvement and so on?**

The soil we inherited was appalling, thick yellow clay subsoil. We started with the front garden, and because I wanted to have roses we planted roses along the front path. A few years later we decided to have a vegetable garden; the front was most suitable, because no one ever uses a front garden and if you don't do something useful with it, it's a waste of space. We realised that we needed good soil for vegetables, so we

dug out tons of clay, then bought in a truckful of topsoil, and added masses of compost. The vegetable garden was really our first success story.

**And what about the back garden?**

We put a rotary hoe through the back, but we finished up by having to replace nearly all the clay soil for the flower borders. Section by section, over several years, we dug out all the clay to a depth of about a foot, carted it away, replaced it with good soil, and again added masses of compost — which we are still applying.

**In retrospect, did you make any major mistakes in these early days?**

Our biggest mistake was trying to grow a lawn from seed. It just took too long and too much effort as the soil was so awful. We would have been far better off putting down turf in the first place — but at least it's green.

**You are growing a number of plants — hybrid clematis for example — that would normally be considered marginal, to say the least, for Sydney's climate. Do you enjoy this sort of challenge?**



I think that is what gardening is all about, it's a challenge, experimenting with plants to see if they will grow for you, and finding out the best spot in the garden for them.

**So you believe that Sydney gardeners could grow a much wider range of plants than one sees in most gardens?**

I'm certain of it, if only people took the trouble to find the plants and experiment with them. But most Sydney gardeners just don't know how to deal with perennials, as they have been hard to obtain until recently, when all things cottagey became fashionable.

**Have you had to discard many plants that you have tried, as being altogether unsuitable for Sydney?**

Yes, Delphiniums I can grow only as annuals, as they don't stand up to the humidity of Sydney in late summer. Nor do paeonies cope well without a hard winter. I would love to grow them but they don't do well. Nor have I had much success with many of the potentillas.

**Some plants in your garden are obviously self sown. Do you allow seedlings to grow where they will?**

Basically, yes. Though some have to be moved if they are obviously in a wrong spot. But I work on the principle that if a plant is growing happily then it must be in the right place, so I try to leave it there. I do give and throw away a lot as there are far too many.



**Would you say that you are ruthless in discarding plants that don't perform as you think they should?**

I give everything a number of chances. If it doesn't succeed at first I move it to a different position, perhaps with more sun, or more shade. I will often give it a third chance, but if that doesn't work, it goes out. I will move plants around until I am satisfied that they are either in the right place or if they are not going to grow well in my garden out they go, and the space is soon filled by more experimental treasures.

---

*"I give everything a number of chances; if it doesn't succeed at first I move it to a different position... I will often give it a third chance, but if that doesn't work it goes out."*

---

**Do you have a favourite group or genus of plants?**

Yes, roses. I really love roses. My husband's cousin's family firm, Cants of Colchester, celebrated 225 years of rose growing in England last year. I have 'Mrs B.R. Cant', a very old red rose, also 'Just Joey', bred in the 1970s; it is now "Rose of the Year".

**What are your favourite roses?**

I would really love to grow many more of the old fashioned roses, like centfolias, albas and damasks, but in a small garden you can't really afford the luxury of plants that bloom only once each season, so in the main I have to stick with recurrent flowerers. 'Canary Bird' is doing very well, although Roy Rumsey

and others told me it won't grow in Sydney!

**Would you call yourself an organic gardener?**

Yes, to a certain extent. I don't use chemical sprays unless I have to. But thrips can be a terrible problem in Sydney and there are times when spraying is necessary. So far as possible I let the predators do their work rather than kill them off too. And I use lots of compost to keep things growing well. We keep poultry so the poultry manure goes on to the compost heap, as well as horse manure and lots of other vegetable matter.

**Could you look after your garden if you only had weekends in which to do it?**

Not really, for there are always things that can't wait until the weekend. For example, if a plant has been battered by the rain you can't just leave it until the following Saturday. I like to spend about half-an-hour every morning just walking round the garden doing little jobs here and there, and just looking and enjoying my garden.

**Do you have any pet hates?**

Not hates exactly, but I can't relate to orange flowers. I find they don't really go with anything else in my garden. One needs a hot coloured border and space to show orange off at its best.

**How would you sum up what you have achieved?**

I do not have a "designed" garden. It has grown like Topsy. After each visit to England I have come home with new plans and ideas; we are always altering and adding, but basically I suppose it's just a miniature recreation from childhood memories, of perfume, colour and texture. Perfume is very important — a great many of my plants are strongly scented and are associated with very happy memories.



*Heather's garden will be open on the weekends 12th-13th Oct. and 26th-27th Oct. 10.30am-3pm in aid of Riding for Disabled Assoc. 6 Camira St, West Pymble NSW*



## LETTERS

Dear Editor,

I was delighted to read Nancy Beckham's timely article on the value of urban and suburban trees (*Garden Journal* Vol 10, No 5, June/July 1991, pp 220-222. Of course trees prevent erosion and flooding, provide shade, food and protection for insects and birds, and enhance the appearance of our homes. These facts are not fully appreciated by town planners, as I discovered recently in the Port Kembla Land and Environment Court. I was objecting to the rezoning of my street as Residential 2B, with consequent revaluation and increase in Council rates as if my home were three villa units.

Certainly my block is 15 metres by 60 metres, but it is on the downhill side of the road towards a creek, and the length is parallel to the slope. The back garden is dominated by several splendid specimens of Sydney Blue Gum (*Eucalyptus saligna*) and in all there are more than 30 trees in the lowest one-third. Transpiration of water through these trees at the rate of 200 litres per kilogram of tree dry matter produced makes an enormous contribution to drainage and prevents the ground becoming a swamp.

The Judge rejected my arguments about the functional attributes of trees, concluding that the "highest and best" use of the site would be as three villa units or town houses. Fortunately there is no compulsion to redevelop one's home along the lines implied by this decision. An enlightened Council would, however, give rate rebates according to the number of trees and their contribution to the mitigation of community costs that would otherwise be incurred, as detailed by Nancy Beckham.

Sincerely,

David Murray, Gynneville, NSW.

Dear Tim,

I am writing on behalf of the Wingecarribee branch of WIRES Inc. WIRES being Wildlife Information and Rescue Service.

This is a volunteer organisation caring for orphaned and injured native wildlife. We are licensed by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and have our head office in Sydney, with various country branches throughout New South Wales.

The Wingecarribee branch is situated in the picturesque Southern Highlands. Not only is our area well known for its beautiful gardens but it also has a diversity of native animals and birds. Our wildlife occasionally meets with misfortune when it comes in contact with the human way of life, and this is where WIRES is involved. Our small but dedicated group of volunteers have their hands full rescuing and foster

caring for injured and orphaned native animals and birds, with the aim of releasing them back into the wild.

Fund raising and appealing for donations is necessary for the effective running of our group, and if any of your readers wish to know more about how they can help WIRES in any way, they may contact:

Wingecarribee WIRES,  
PO Box 1149, Bowral, NSW 2576.  
Warren Waples, Wingecarribee Branch Chairman.



Dear Mr North,

Your June/July *Garden Journal* is the first I have purchased and I was so impressed with the articles that I have already sent off for a two-year subscription. I particularly enjoyed the articles on Buda, Impressions in some English Gardens, and Norfolk Island. Thank you for most enjoyable reading.

Yours faithfully,

(Mrs) Betty Tregaskis, Mount Eliza, Vic.

Dear Tim,

We all read with great interest your editorial in the June/July issue of the *Garden Journal*, and hope you will be kind enough to correct a misunderstanding. Val Sinclair, Chairperson of Victoria's Garden Scheme, says:

"We would hate to think that the rest of Australia believed that "the Garden State can still find only some 120 gardens whose owners are willing to co-operate". In fact we have a register of over 250 gardens that have participated and are willing to be part of the Scheme, plus a substantial waiting list for the 1992/93 season.

"Why don't we open all available gardens at the same time? You will appreciate that the programme requires constant refreshment to stimulate public interest, and at the same time many garden owners don't want a permanent commitment, for various reasons, the most obvious being the time and effort required to prepare their gardens for opening. Also, experience has shown that nobody benefits if too many gardens are open at the same time, as is likely to happen in mid-spring when many are at their best.

"We would welcome the establishment of similar schemes in other states, all complementing one another."

*LETTERS continued on page 13*



# Gazebos & Summerhouses

In some respects a gazebo or summerhouse is the ideal adult cubby house. This may sound a little disrespectful but they really are places for fun, for sipping champagne on a special occasion, or watching the family play tennis. Sometimes we even put a spa inside one.

Whatever the reason the summerhouse is usually located within sight of the house; therefore we try to make it look as attractive as we can.

Its shape and size can vary. It can be square, rectangular, hexagonal, or octagonal. Size is often dictated by space, but sometimes by budget. And it can be built from a variety of materials, from maintenance free aluminium to the warm rustic effect of timber.

How does one acquire a summerhouse or gazebo? The options are fairly simple. Build one yourself, ask a builder to construct one according to your specification, or buy a standard model from a specialist manufacturer.

The most cost effective option is to buy a standard model from a reputable specialist manufacturer. One such company is the Australian Summerhouse Company who set up operations in 1988 near Windsor in New South Wales.

## LETTERS

*continued from page 12*

Can you let us have some suggestions how to contact the New Zealand gardens people? We maintain a liaison with the National Gardens Scheme of England and Wales, and in the early stages had helpful correspondence with the Scots. It would be nice to compare notes with our comparatively close counterparts across the Tasman.

With kind regards,  
Shirly Hawker  
Co-ordinator, Victoria's Garden Scheme.

Dear Mr North,

I am interested in obtaining seed of *Brassica oleracea costata* (Portuguese cabbage or Couve tronchuda) and wonder whether any of the readers of *The Australian Garden Journal* could provide me with seed or advise me as to where I may obtain seed.

Yours faithfully,  
W.M. Moore,  
Superintendent Parks and Gardens,  
City of Moorabbin,  
PO Box 21 Moorabbin, Vic. 3189.

A primary part of their business comprises a range of timber summerhouses, which are made in a unique modular format. This provides a number of advantages; it enables the handyman to undertake the assembly and it means the structure can be installed after a base is prepared, thus minimising delays.

The Australian Summerhouse Company has several standard designs and sizes or will construct a design to your specifications. Sizes for the standard range start at 2.5 metres and can be as large as 4 metres.

Materials used are kiln dried treated pine and cedar. All components are made by the company; for example, lattice, if it is required, is made from one species of pine with all knots removed and the lathe is dressed with rounded edges.

Also available is a range of aluminium gazebos built in Victorian style with lace and a choice of roof styles.

The Australian Summerhouse Company is owned and operated by Geoff and Jan Hermon, so clients deal only with the principals of the company. Their display centre is open seven days a week and is located at 601 Windsor Road (formerly 82), Vineyard. A free on site quoting service is available. Products are unconditionally guaranteed against faulty manufacture.



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# Woodstock Garden

## Hobart, Tasmania

*Tom CROSSEN describes the evolution and development of a property that is linked to and integrated with the history of Australia's oldest brewery — Cascade*



**I**n September 1823 a ship called the “Hope” set sail from England bound for Hobart Town. On board were 43 passengers, among them Peter Degrares, who at the age of 46 had brought his wife, four sons and four daughters to begin a new life in a new colony, Van Diemen’s Land. The “Hope” arrived in Hobart on Saturday 10th April 1824.

The Colonial Secretary in London, Lord Bathurst, recommended Degrares as a desirable settler, and Governor Sorell granted him 2,000 acres at the foot of

Table Mountain (later renamed Mount Wellington). The area was known as “the Cascades”. After later purchases of land the property totalled 5,000 acres and extended across the heavily timbered slopes of Table Mountain, from Lenah Valley to Sandy Bay Rivulet. On a section of the property, where two mountain streams converged, Degrares installed a water wheel to power his newly built sawmill.

Peter Degrares was a human dynamo. The son of a surgeon, he was an architect of no mean ability, and an





*(opposite page) Aerial view from the Brewery*

*(above) Cascade Brewery from Cascade Gardens*

*(left) Entrance to Woodstock*

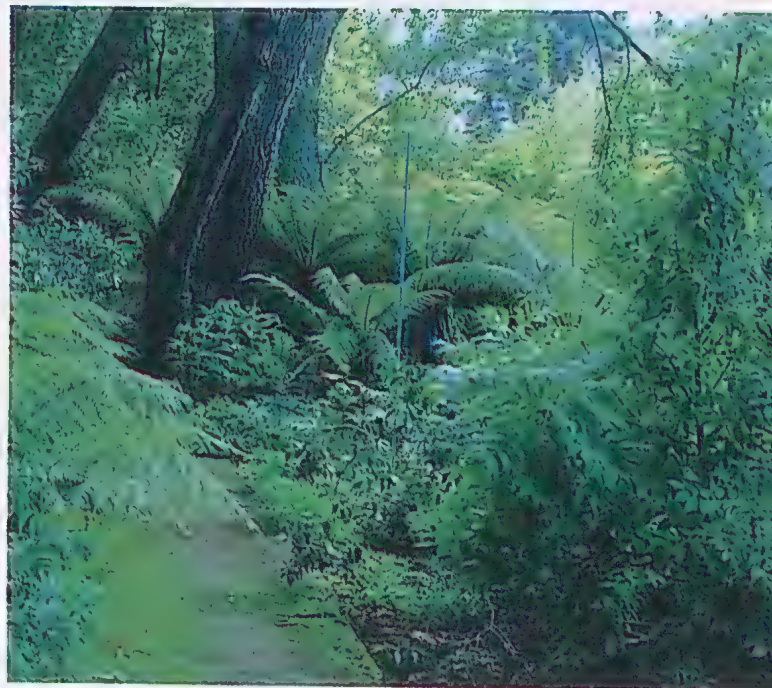
*(below) Manferns in the lower end of the garden*

*photos Tom Crossen*



able draftsman. A fascinating and powerful man, he fell foul of the law for an offence committed in England prior to emigrating for which he claimed were trumped-up charges of bankruptcy.

He was imprisoned in the old Hobart Gaol on the corner of Macquarie and Murray Streets from 1826 to 1831. During that time he put his architectural talents to good use by redesigning the very gaol that held him, and planning a new brewery to be known as the Cascade Brewery. Later, in 1834, he designed and built the ➡





## ***The Garden at Woodstock..., continued***

delightful Victoria Theatre which is now recognised — under its present name, Theatre Royal — as the oldest theatre in Australia, and considered to be acoustically faultless.

After his release from gaol in 1831, Degraives returned to Cascades and began building a brewery. A year later regular supplies of beer, ale and porter were available to customers from the Cascade Brewery.

Degraives subsequently developed an elaborate system of water reticulation to service his enterprises at Cascades; this also provided Hobart with its first supply of piped fresh water.

Peter Degraives died on 31 December, 1852, aged 74, and was buried in St David's Cemetery (now St David's Park).

Ownership and management now devolved into the hands of the last surviving son, John Degraives. On his death in 1880 the remaining enterprises were re-structured under the entrepreneurship of John Wemyss Syme, a Scot, and floated as a public company in 1883.

While the term "colonial" would categorise the stone facade of the Brewery architecturally, the building owes strong allegiance to English 19th century mill design. The building exhibits window detail in the style of the Romanesque period with roof pediments and gables characteristic of the Renaissance period.

The building did not escape the disastrous bushfires which swept southern Tasmania in 1967. Although the original stone structure built in 1832 remained intact, the building was substantially restored internally at a cost of \$3 million — a not inconsiderable sum at the time.

Marcus Clarke, author of "For the Term of His Natural Life", who visited the Cascade Brewery in the 1860s, wrote:

"The place had quaint surroundings, which beat all creation in their peculiar style of beauty. The climate is almost British, and the adjacent mountain gullies are not only picturesque, but historically interesting.

I spoke to several old employees of the Brewery, and listened to histories of the early days, the founding of the Brewery, and the trials and troubles of the founder. Around these recitals one may weave columns of romance, and if I cannot get some good copy out of them, I will throw down my pen for ever.

All the beauty spots of the world seem mixed up in the Cascade Valley. I have never seen anything like it before, and I probably never will again. The quality of the ale and beer brewed by Mr Degraives bears the

palm amongst its colonial rivals without pretence of dispute. I wandered through the mazes of its cavernous cool cellars, and I partook of the brews, both old and young. The quality was beyond cavil. I had tasted nothing like it since I was in the Old Country. It is the mountain waters that make the beer what it is. But I must leave the beauties and delights of the surroundings of the Cascade Brewery, the qualities and cheering effects of its products, and its antiquities behind me. I am a wanderer, and I am bound for other places, goodness knows where".

### **Mount Wellington**

Mount Wellington (1278 m) is a strikingly abrupt end to a chain of mountains, uniform in height, extending for several miles away beyond the skyline. Its sharply vertical eastern facade, buttressed by rock columns known as "organ pipes", almost a thousand feet high and reaching within a stone's throw of its pinnacle, dominated enterprise in Hobart in the 19th century. In the early 1880s the mountain exerted substantial influence on the welfare of the people living in its afternoon shadows. It provided timber for housing and ship building, a barometer for the weather and water for drinking and industry.

When Peter Degraives chose "the Cascades" as the site for his brewery, he found everything he needed and more. The big bonus was, of course, the water. Mount Wellington was, and still is a constant source of some of the purest, sweetest water in the world. This is because Tasmania is situated in the path of the "Roaring Forties", cool fresh air currents bringing rainfall to the Island in clouds unbroken by land mass for 10,000 kilometres.

### **Woodstock — the Garden**

Peter Degraives built his home in the area of Woodstock in the early 1800s and planted a garden. The beauty and grandeur of the brewery, mountain and surrounding hills attracted frequent visits from Haughton Forrest (1826–1925) and his paintings reveal Woodstock with surrounding gardens laid out in large square beds with interesting paths.

The garden had a number of fruit trees; the flower beds held colourful dahlias and were bordered with more. Several of the trees and plants date back to when the original cottage was built, around 1830.

During the original construction of the garden, water was laid throughout; it serviced two fountains and filled the fish-stocked basins below; the water emanated from the water system set down by Degraives in the 1830s and remains so today.

A variety of herbs is grown in the cottage garden and a formal rose garden holds many varieties of old roses.



The cottage garden was used as an air raid shelter in World War II, whilst the conifer hedge surrounding Woodstock bears evidence of the disastrous bushfires of February 1967 which devastated the brewery.

The garden covers 1.2 hectares and includes many magnificent trees such as Douglas Fir, Portuguese Laurel, Spanish Chestnut, Norweigian Spruce, English Holly and Oak, Grey Poplars, Silver Birches, willows, a Lawson's Cypress, magnolias and a pear tree at least 70 years old.

Camellias, rhododendrons and azaleas grow in profusion among the manferns in the lower end of the garden. When the brewery trucks delivered beer to Queenstown hotels in the Depression of the 1930s, the drivers back-loaded the empty trucks with ferns for the garden. In the 1870s the area to the south of Woodstock known as "the paddock" was a deer park.

Structurally, the house of Woodstock itself has moved from a series of cottages to a single storey building and later to a two-storey building, as exists today. The front entrance overlooked the garden with a winding path leading to the front gate on Cascade Road immediately adjacent to the "double decker" tram terminus where the inhabitants of Hobart regularly journeyed to undertake bush walking excursions or enjoy a leisurely stroll and afternoon tea in Sayers' aster and rose gardens nearby,

now known as Cascade Gardens owned and maintained by the City of Hobart. When a sunroom was built across the front entrance in the 1950s the front door was transferred to face the driveway on the southern side. Sandstone columns remain in the middle of the lawn as stark reminders of the lovely pergola which featured the pathway to the original entrance.

Woodstock was the traditional home of the Chief Executive of The Cascade Brewery Company Limited until 1988, when the property was developed as a function centre.

### Degraves' legacy

The gardens of Woodstock remain among Australia's oldest historic gardens with a distinct European influence. They nestle at the base of Mount Wellington and exude an ambience of peace and tranquility. The site, in 1989, was developed as an historic area by the Company and encompasses a function centre and a museum, with the adjoining brewery.

This unique brewery, which traces its history back to the arrival at the site of its founder in 1824, is the oldest brewery in Australia.

The precinct remains a witness to the private enterprise and dynamism of Peter Degraves and a challenge to those who follow in his ways.



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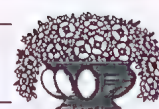


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## BOOK REVIEWS



### ***Complete Book of Fruit Growing in Australia***

**by Dr Louis Glowinski; published  
by Lothian Books, 1991;  
recommended retail price \$75.00  
reviewed by Tim North**

Complete it certainly is — the most comprehensive coverage of temperate, sub-tropical and tropical fruits suitable for growing in this country ever published. From pome and stone fruits, through berries and nuts, to citrus, olives and avocados, to palms and vines, it takes us to native fruits like quandongs and ballarts, and myrtaceous fruits like guavas, ugnis and lumas. There are 350 pages of practical advice with 250 photographs, both black/white and colour. If you are going to grow fruit for pleasure or commerce, you won't be able to find a better book.

### ***Siftings***

**by Jens Jensen; published by John  
Hopkins University Press,  
Baltimore, 1990  
reviewed by Tim North**

Even in the country in which he spent all his working life, the name Jens Jensen is little known. After a brief period with the West Chicago Park District he began his career as a landscape architect in 1900. He returned to the Park District six years later as its landscape architect and stayed there for 14 years; but in 1920 he left the city's employment for good to devote his time to private practice. After his wife's death in 1934 he turned the practice over to his son and realised his life's dream of establishing a school where people from all walks of life could "learn the lesson of the soil". He called it The Clearing, referring not an open field in the woodlands of Wisconsin but to the clearing of the mind that could occur there.

It was at The Clearing that he wrote "Siftings", his major literary work, which was first published in 1939. This new edition will no doubt help to establish Jensen among the greatest of American landscape architects — Downing, Olmsted, Cleveland and the like. Jensen was an ecologist long before ecology

became fashionable. He used native species almost exclusively in his landscapes; he believed that "to try to force plants to grow in soil or climate unfitted for them and against nature's methods will sooner or later spell ruin. Besides, such a method tends to make the world commonplace and to destroy the ability to unfold an interesting and beautiful landscape out of the environment". But nature could not be copied — "Man cannot copy God's outdoors. He can interpret the message in a composition of living hopes. The real worth of the landscape lies in his ability to give to humanity the blessing of nature's spiritual values as they are interpreted in his art. The field is boundless and there is no need of importing from foreign shores. To the true artist it is like a great adventure into the mysteries of an unknown world".

Jensen was a romantic. In his Foreword to this edition, Charles E. Little, series editor for American Land Classics, likens him to Wordsworth and Thoreau. Perhaps we are now beginning to re-learn that there is a place for romance in landscape architecture. In some respects Jensen's "Prairie Landscapes" were the forerunners of van Sweden's and Oehme's "New American Garden".

Davel G. Morrison, Dean of the School of Environmental Design at the University of Georgia, contributes an Afterword to this little treasure of a book.

### ***Green Grows Our Garden***

**by A.P. Winzenreid; published  
by Hyland House; recommended  
retail price \$25.00  
reviewed by Anne Latreille**

A workmanlike centenary history of horticultural education at Burnley College, whose educational activities may not be quite as wide-ranging to-day as the 1914 description of "tuition on all subjects pertaining to Horticulture, and in addition on Bee-keeping, Poultry Raising, Fruit Drying and Preserving, etc.", but whose graduates can be found in key policy making positions and at all other levels throughout the workforce in areas of horticulture, planning and landscape policy.

The book is well illustrated, particularly with historic material, and includes much valuable information about horticultural doings and personalities in the early years of the century. Staff past and present are given due recognition and all graduates (where known) are listed. The College's character — "a happy place with a very relaxed atmosphere" — shines through. The point is well made that "the campus in its garden setting... continues to exercise a sort of garden magic on all who spend time at Burnley".

### ***The Complete Book of Bonsai***

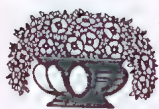
**by Harry Tomlinson; published  
by Abbeyville Press, New York,  
1991; approx \$60.00  
reviewed by Trevor Nottle**

The first thing that would have to be said is that this is a lovely book. The photography is beautiful and the layout stylish. It would also have to be said that bonsai is not every gardener's cup of tea. Indeed many find it quite outside their understanding of the arts of gardening. This is why the introductory chapters are so important; for within those few pages a thousand years of European gardening traditions have to be persuaded to accept an Asian tradition at least as old.

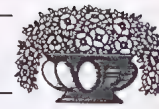
Though brief, the early chapters do make serious inroads on the widely held perception that bonsai are "tortured trees". An appreciation can be gained which assists our understanding of the visual, tactile and meditative qualities that may be derived from the cultivation of bonsai. In performing the necessary daily care rituals and in following the seasonal patterns of the plants and of their maintenance the bonsai grower shares with all gardeners the quiet pleasures of creation and harmonious balance with the natural world.

The bulk of the text is given over to a comprehensive survey of the world of bonsai and their cultivation. Each page is amply illustrated in colour so that readers can see the variety of pots, equipment and species that may be used to create "classic" bonsai styles and the more recent "freeform" Western styles de-





## BOOK REVIEWS



veloped by enthusiasts in America and England.

As an introduction this book must surely be a great influence on the popularity of bonsai. The author writes with clarity, experience and authority and the presentation and layout are splendid. The quality of the colour photographs is exceptionally high, "mouth-watering" in fact.

Highly recommended, though the cultural advice will need to be heeded with caution and sensitivity to the harder conditions of the Australian climate.

### ***Portuguese Gardens***

**by Helder Carita and Antonio Homem Cardoso; published by Antique Collectors' Club, 1990; recommended retail price \$118.50 reviewed by Brian Morley**

"This book is a garden and one can stroll through it, stop and breathe in the atmosphere... It presents us with the unsettling idea of a Portuguese garden, walled-in, made for staying inside, full of smells and peace".

So writes Mignel Esteves Cardoso in a preface to the English translation of this book. The translation is by David Kirkby.

Not only is the book large and beautiful enough to help transport the reader to Portugal, but it is to my knowledge the only modern work on Portuguese gardens, which have a particular relevance to the Australian climate. The amalgamation of Mediterranean and Islamic cultural influences in the evolution of the Portuguese garden provides a lesson from which we in Australia might learn; not necessarily to imitate or emulate, but in the creation of our own gardens and civic landscapes.

Carita, an architect, and Cardoso, a photographer, have previously collaborated on the Portuguese magazine "Casa e Decoracao" (Home Decoration), and the arrangement of the book has a magazine-like quality which is dignified and which features copious colour photographs of a uniformly high standard. Watercolour sketch plans of most of the gardens mentioned assist the garden descriptions

which are assembled in a series of chapters explaining the development and essential characteristics of what has become the Portuguese garden since Roman times.

The structural elements which have relevance to some of us in Australia are the intimate enclosure of a "small, green, cool universe" in a dry and often hot environment; the provision of reflecting pools, although not necessarily fountains, and use of often bold elaborate and exquisite coloured tilework in conjunction with pavilions, flower boxes and a variety of ornamental paving materials; the provision of promenades through deliberately fragrant, often low formal planting, or small orchards in which orange, lemon and jasmine feature; and the creation of an introverted and sacred, primarily architectural leisure garden, unlike the more extroverted and profane landscape garden of northern Europe paying homage to surrounding nature.

The book makes the interesting point that the development of the Portuguese garden evolves "out of the Gothic-Manueline (the reigns of Don Manuel I, II) tradition into the Baroque without any indication of true Renaissance ideals". The Islamic influence creates a garden space which the author describes as "crypto-sacred"; "surrounded by high walls, the gardens are like secret places... removed from all contact with the outside". Portugal's colonial influence also encouraged Indo-Portuguese decorative shell-work which characterised the 17th century and still to be seen in the gardens of the Fronteira Palace. The ecclesiastical influence of the 18th century, following the Counter-Reformation, reached its height (and excess) in the reign of Don Joao V, yet it was the era of the great master glazed tile makers, Oliveira Bernardes the younger and elder, and Gabriel del Barco. The remarkable tile work of the gardens of the Quinta dos Azulejos is breathtaking. The gardens of the Quinta da Assuncao are perhaps the 19th century culmination of the typical Portuguese garden.

The only admonition I would make is that the botanical names should have

been better proof-read on pages 300-303; the only real blemish to a splendid work. The book complements Georgina Masson's classic "Italian Gardens", although for up-to-date information on the latter Judith Chatfield's "A Tour of Italian Gardens" (1988) published by Rizzoli, New York, is informative, attractive and a more convenient size for a touring guide.

### ***The Hairbells of Africa* by O.M. Hilliard and B.L. Burtt; published by Acorn Books, Johannesburg, 1991. reviewed by Brian Morley**

For people who love plants there is, you may agree, a particular sort of book which has the necessary appeal to warp their judgement, to part them from their money. A well produced, illustrated popular monograph on an attractive genus of plants is both useful and beautiful; both a reference and aesthetic treat on a cold winter evening by the fire. Bowles' work on *Crocus* and *Colchicum* is one such book, Stern's on

*Galanthus* and *Leucojum* another. And although the nomenclature may sometimes be dated, not necessarily through the fault of the author, these works have a habit of increasing in value.

Popular plant monographs have this power because they are self-contained, should represent the totality of knowledge of the group concerned, and often contain distinctive artwork by an accomplished artist, or photographer as in the case of Blanchard's recent *Narcissus* work. This is certainly so for this new work on *Dierama*, the African hairbell. Not since 1929, when N.E. Brown at Kew gave the last unillustrated account of the genus has there been a reassessment of this most lovely of Southern African iridaceous genera. In the 1920s there were 25 species recognised; today 44 species are described and a much improved understanding exists of variation due to natural hybridisation. However, one is aware of being confronted with a difficult taxonomic group.





## BOOK REVIEWS



The contents are classical in approach; an introduction, horticultural history of the genus, botanical history (the species were once considered to belong to *Sparaxis*), morphology and anatomy, the classification of the genus in Iridaceae, description of variation patterns and comment on geographical distribution and evolutionary history. The systematic description and illustration of each species is preceded by identification keys. A bibliography and good index is supplemented by a useful global list of nursery suppliers of *Dierama*. Ken Gillanders Woodbank Nursery at Kingston, Tas. 7150, is the only Australian supplier listed.

I have deliberately left mention of the illustrations of Auriol Batten until last, because they contribute so much to the character of the work. These delicate watercolours have a luminosity which capture the often subtle colours of the flowers of *Dierama* species; from purplish-black through violet to pink or even cream to pale yellow. Mrs Batten is a distinguished South African botanical artist and her pencil habit and habitat sketches are satisfying as well as informative. A few of the species described are illustrated by full page coloured photographs of herbarium specimens; they work better visually than one would expect. The text is clearly written, concise, and the 152 page book handles well. That only half a dozen species are in cultivation is no excuse for not buying this lovely book.

(Note: Hairbells of Africa is obtainable from North Lodge Shop, Adelaide Botanic Gardens, for \$65.00; ring (08)228.2345.)

***The Gardens of Tuscany***  
by Ethne Clarke and Raffaello Bencini; published by Weidenfeld and Nicholson; \$39.95

***The Renaissance of Italian Gardens***  
by Lorenza de Medici; published by Pavilion Books; \$55.00

### ***Italian Gardens; A Visitor's Guide***

by Alex Ramsay and Helena Attlee; published by Robertson McCarta; \$34.95  
reviewed by John Patrick

Judging by the number of books published about them in the last two or three years, Italian gardens are undergoing a revival in popularity. The three titles under review are from a recent spate of books covering different aspects of their subject.

Ethne Clarke bases her work on three Tuscan cities, Lucca, Florence and Siena, centres which provide a useful basis for the study of the gardens of this delightful region and increasingly popular tourist destination. The reason for this book's production and its aims are not quite clear, apart from a desire on the author's part to visit gardens shown in her great-grandmother's postcard collection. In the space available she is able to provide little more than an introductory text combined with a series of excellent photographs, sufficient perhaps to make the enthusiast turn to Georgina Masson's masterful "Italian Gardens". If it achieves no more than this and encourages more visitors to discover for themselves the delights of these gardens, then it will have served its purpose well.

I should, perhaps, confess that Siena, with Bruges, is my favourite city, but interesting as the gardens about it are, I fear they are not generally as fine as those around Lucca and Florence, and it is indeed the latter which dominates this book. While the greater gardens receive most attention there is much pleasure to be derived from the numerous wayside gardens and landscapes which abound in this region, and a number of these are shown — farmhouse gardens with vegetables and trees, townhouses boasting rows of decorative pots.

There are no such simple delights in Lorenza de Medici's book, for this specifically attempts to show 25 of the best of Italy's recent gardens, some totally new, others designed on the site of

existing Renaissance gardens, neglected through time and now renovated.

The diversity of gardens shown is fantastic and ranges from the extraordinary traditional, as in Villa Pontificia Gondolfo, the Papal summer retreat, to the modern and functional in the superb Lo Studio on Capri.

What is evident from this book is that the classical Renaissance garden of Italy still appears to form the basis for Italian garden design today, yet this has been largely tempered by the introduction of an enormous range of plants so that few of the gardens are without dashing splashes of colour, some enormously successful, others less so. Strangely, the images that are most haunting are those of ageing planting, like the Hornbeam Avenue at Villa Rizzardi and the Umbrella Pines at Villa Pontificia.

Most pleasing is the way that some of the more recent gardens reflect modern design responses to a Mediterranean climate, and in this aspect there is much for gardeners of south-eastern Australia to learn. Yet to balance this there is a strong element of cool temperate waterside and water demanding planting, using extensive herbaceous schemes and probably deriving from English influences.

Unfortunately there is no information provided about visiting any of the gardens described, and this is where Alex Ramsay and Helena Attlee come into the picture, for all their gardens are open; indeed the purpose of this book is to get visitors to the gardens, most of them of historic foundation. 59 gardens are covered by a brief but illuminating history, a description and then a box giving details of the closest town, booking details, owner, address, location, opening times and dates, admission charges, refreshments, lavatories and wheelchair access. Quite simply, this book is essential to the traveller and though there are other gardens open to the traveller willing to write in advance and book, the major gardens are included here and would offer a fine basis for a holiday.



# Why Seaweed in the Garden?

*Benjamin ISAACS looks at this renewable natural resource from our oceans,  
and its value in the garden*

## Introduction

We can go back to the days of the Roman Empire, citing literature describing the use of brown marine algae in agriculture. In more recent times the application of marine algae dates from early in the 17th century. Along the coastlines of north-west Europe, that is England, Ireland, Scotland, France, Germany and Denmark, most of the foreshore situated agricultural communities have been gathering kelp and using it as a source of main fertiliser to grow commercial crops.

The harvesting of kelp became so intensive that in 1610 the French passed a Royal Decree which controlled, or at least attempted to control, the harvesting of kelp for agriculture. This was the first attempt to manage a natural marine resource. It was not until 1948 that an English chemist discovered a method by which kelp could be liquified, producing the first seaweed extract. The marine algae used was *Ascophyllum nodosum*. Since the early 1950s about eight companies have developed methods of producing kelp extract from brown kelps. One such is the Seasol Division of LRL Rezitech Pty Ltd, which produces Seasol Liquid Organic Seaweed.

Generally speaking, there are four main groups of marine algae, the red seaweeds, green seaweeds, blue-green seaweeds, and the brown seaweeds. It is the brown seaweeds on which this article is focussed.

## Brown Seaweeds (Open kelps)

In the tidal zones of the Australian southern coast a number

of brown kelps are widely distributed and they reach from the tidal to the subtidal zones. Near the coast lines of southern Australia on the continental shelf areas we have huge populations of *Macrocystis*, *Aglonia* and *Durvillaea potatorum*. The last named is used as the raw material for Seasol. Its distribution ranges from Robe in South Australia to Gabo Island, near the New South Wales border. The largest and tallest populations occur along the west coast of Tasmania, where the water temperature, at around 41 degrees south, never exceeds 20 degrees Celsius and the nutrient flow in the ocean is abundant.

*Durvillaea potatorum*, the raw material *Durvillaea potatorum*, or Southern Kelp, is the best raw material from which to produce seaweed extract. Other brown kelp species contain only about 28% to 32% of a compound called alginic acid; *Durvillaea potatorum* contains from 56% to 75% alginic acid.

Alginic acid is a polysaccharide, a sugar or natural polymer. It is the kelp's main structural building block; it is the same to kelp as cellulose is to terrestrial plants.

No other kelp can match this level of alginic acid. The higher the alginic acid content the higher the growth regulator and mineral content of the algae. When the kelp is hydrolised the whole chemical make-up of the algae becomes water soluble, including the cytokinins and the auxins. Apart from these compounds, Seasol contains about 60 different trace elements in a well balanced form, ready for immediate plant uptake.

Seaweed extracts manufactured from Tasmanian kelp are now inter-

nationally recognised as a nutrient rich natural fertiliser supplement. They contain chelating compounds in the form of alginates and manitol; chelating is the actual "unlocking" of otherwise unavailable soil-bound nutrients.

Seasol is by no means a complete fertiliser, but should be used in addition to normal fertilising programs. In the home garden, both on ornamentals and vegetables, use 10 ml of Seasol in 10 litres of water each week during the growing season. Using Seasol ensures that your plants utilise fertiliser efficiently. Seasol has a positive influence on the size of blooms and the depth of colour. In fruit trees, Seasol will help fruit set and provide the conditions for large, good quality fruit to develop.

Regular applications of Seasol will have an influence on the general health of any plant and will provide conditions for maintaining plant vigour. Plants that have been sprayed with Seasol are far less susceptible to environmental stress as well as fungal and insect attack. Studies carried out at the University of Tasmania and the University of Hiroshima have shown that the kelp extracts such as Seasol will increase microbial activity in soils.

## Timing of spray applications

At a dilution rate of 1/1000 Seasol should be applied during the growing season on a weekly basis, but if this is not possible, the most important time is just prior to the time of cell differentiation, that is just before flowering, fruiting and bud formation.



## Why Seaweed in the Garden, continued

### Composting

Seaweed can be used in the compost making process. Peatmoss can be soaked in liquid seaweed before being mixed with compost or potting mix. Poor soils can be greatly improved because the seaweed helps to bind sandy soils and loosen clay soils.

### Harvesting the kelp

The exploitation of *Durvillaea potatorum* in Australia is controlled by the Federal Government as well as by the Tasmanian State Government. A kelp licensing licence is needed to gather kelp, and companies also need to have a management plan approved by the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service to use the resource. Australia's major kelp harvesting


operation is presently based on the west coast of King Island near the town of Currie. When the "Roaring Forties" occur each year huge amounts of kelp are torn up and deposited on the foreshore of King Island.

The kelp is collected from the foreshores or from the shallows of the tidal zone, usually being pulled up onto the beach with a grappling hook. Some of these plants can weigh more than 100 kg and may be up to ten metres in length, so considerable physical strength is needed for this operation. The kelp is then dried on special racks on the foreshore, where, according to weather conditions, it will dry in anything from a fortnight to several months. If very wet the kelp is air-dried down to about 30% moisture and then cut into smaller pieces of about 300 to 600 mm lengths. It is then dried down to less than 20% moisture and then chopped up and crushed with specialised milling equipment. Finally it is sieved and packed into

bags of various particle sizes, by which time the moisture content can be as low as 12%.

### My personal experience with Seasol

I have personally witnessed improved vigour and plant health, as well as more blooms over a given period. Tasmanian kelp helps to increase chlorophyll production in leaves, and is suitable for all natives, exotics, crop plants, and indoor plants.

I believe that the time is ripe for a change in our use of fertilisers. Instead of using high NPK fertilisers we should view our gardens holistically as a living organism; organic materials like seaweed helps to give the garden biotic diversity by encouraging micro-organisms and by adding micro-nutrients and enzymes to enhance plant growth. We must learn to harmonise with nature; seaweed is leading us down the path to self-sustainability. 



"Whitley" - Moss Vale

Drawing by Robyn Mayo

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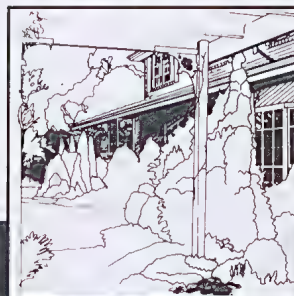
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Gail THOMAS reports.*

Originally built as the private residence of a gold commissioner during the 1860's goldrush era it was later extended and dedicated as Holy Cross Convent, a private presentation school for girls. The Convent was closed in 1982, but it has now been magnificently restored, retaining many of its Victorian architectural features.

It now houses seven individual specious galleries on two levels, from which work local potters, artisans and painters with glassware, pottery, jewellery, sculpture, handmade furniture and antiques.

An informal Mediterranean styled Gallery cafe overlooks the fragrant and colourful Victorian garden surrounds which complete this picturesque setting in a region renowned for its heritage and tranquil beauty. Future plans for the garden include a paved area in which to sit, along with attractive walks incorporating rose, herb and perennial gardens. Old cedars on the property are already an asset, while splashes of colour come from hollies, rhododendrons, bedding plants and potted fruiting cumquats.

As the property backs onto the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens, garden lovers are bound to find plenty to interest them in this delightful pocket of history, right in the heart of Daylesford.

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# The Garden Resort Hotel Bowral

After two years of operation Resort Hotel Bowral Heritage Park now has a maturing garden of diverse cool climate plantings.

Initially designed and constructed by Valarie Dawson in the English style, the garden was developed around some well established existing trees, the formal marquee lawns and lake. These have become the focal points of the garden.

The original house was built in 1929 for a Miss Beare, of Beare and Ley fame, who planted many camellias and rhododendrons around the house. The property later passed to a Mr Harris, of Harris Street Ultimo, who named it "Iver Bucks". It subsequently changed hands several times until, in 1956, E.H.G. Fischer landscaped the grounds for a Mr Walcott, draining the swampy paddock and planting many trees, including the oaks, elms and deodars that exist to-day.

While, sadly, a number of these trees were lost in the construction of the hotel, which opened in June 1989, including Miss Beare's avenue of giant camellias, many were saved and have new homes in the garden.

As part of the construction and design team, Andrew Kavunenko stayed on as head gardener, and with his offsider Ian Berry completed the landscaping of the property and further developed the gardens. A formal kitchen garden, with raised sandstone beds set in pink granite gravel paths, has just been established and is already supplementing the supply of herbs and vegetables for the restaurant. Raspberries, currants and gooseberries

have been planted, and additional herbs and edible flowers will be planted in spring. The adjoining gravel garden has displays in pots set among miniature varieties of iris and agapanthus. Presently under construction is a wistaria and clematis tunnel set in a scented garden, with *Camellia sasanqua* 'Setsugekka', *Chimonanthus praecox*, daphne and scented rhododendrons with underplanting of scented perennials.

As you enter the garden opposite the front door of the Resort you will descend steps flanked by banks of lupins, which after flowering act as support for summer flowering phlox, echinacea, aconite and delphinium, with summer and autumn flowering asters. There is an avenue of *Robinia decaisneana* (Pink Wistaria) and clipped box edging, which separates the two lawns, which in turn are enclosed by the cherry laurel hedge on three sides. Having passed through an opening in the hedge the lake comes into view. This was created as part of the landscaping plans for the Resort Hotel, and lies in the path of a natural water easement, contributing to the tranquil splendour of the garden. Surrounded by gardens and edged with sandstone, it is populated by koi carp and planted with water lilies and other aquatic plants. The lake also acts as a settling pond for the bore water that is used to irrigate the six acres of grounds. Plantings around the lake are varied, and include banks of Japanese iris, cannas and arums, drifts of pink and white filipendula, astilbes and primulas, red and yellow stemmed *Cornus*, willows and a couple of burgeoning gunneras.



(left) "Iver Bucks" before construction of the hotel

(right) The garden to-day



# den At – ral Heritage Park



Grey foliage plants feature strongly throughout the garden; there is a grey garden as such, where *Asphodeline lutea* and *Echium wildpretii* combine with salvias, artemisias, euphorbias and others, with an edge of variegated arabis. Buddleias and artemisias cope well with the heavy soil.

These formal areas give way to informal woodland walks, where drifts of daffodils emerge out of the grass under pinoaks, crab apples and Manchurian pears. Japanese anemones, hellebores and spring and autumn flowering bulbs take their turn in areas, while self seeding cosmos, love-in-the-mist, Queen Anne's Lace, foxgloves and poppies flower in a grove of silver birch.

There are also areas of annual displays and mixed plantings. Massed wallflowers edged with pansies cover the ground under magnolias, set against a hedge of photinia. Outside Reception pink and yellow tulips emerge through a carpet of white violas. In other areas *Astrantia major* combines with variegated hydrangeas under weeping cherries and *Stachyurus praecox*; *Ceanothus* 'Trewithen Blue' shares space with French lavender, scabious and *Melianthus*. Hostas, *Meconopsis cambrica*, lobelias, *Anemone rivularis* and *A. sylvestris* cover the ground under 'Mount Fuji' cherries, *Ulmus parvifolia* and *Edgeworthia*.

The garden at Resort Hotel Bowral Heritage Park, while still young, is a dynamic garden. The emphasis on perennials creates great seasonal variation and the freshness of youth.



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# Wildflowers, the Late

by Clive

The environmental movement is having its impact on the choices that gardeners are making in their own back yards. It has spawned several emerging trends, particularly a concern for more natural forms of gardening which may be expressed in many ways. To some, a return to simpler flowers such as daisies and poppies presumably reflects an abhorrence for the modern developments of larger and more fully double

flowers like marigolds. The recent boom in "cottage gardening" represents a move away from more formal flower gardening, expressed at its worst in the rigid municipal riots of colour our eyes have tired of! For cottage gardening is all about encouraging informality and even untidiness for the purpose of creating a more natural floral display. Marigolds and petunias are not flowers that harmonise well, and cottage gardeners

(above) The wildflower meadow at Heronswood Dromana.

(left) Wildflower carpet at 10 weeks.

(below) Love in the Mist

(opposite page) Californian poppies

photos by courtesy of Diggers Seeds







# st Trend in Gardening

LAZEY

have sought out the perennials with simple flowers like Japanese anemones and lupins rather than the overly improved dahlias and chrysanthemums. For perennials are really a cultivated form of wildflower, being plants taken from the wild and placed in gardens without the restricting hand of the plant breeder.

Now gardeners are seeking the plants they have seen growing naturally on the sides of roads, like Queen Anne's Lace in Victoria and coreopsis in northern New South Wales. Returning from Europe and America, Australians have become enthusiastic for Flanders Poppy, with its dazzling single red flowers that grows in the wheat fields of France and England. Unable to cultivate Australian native wildflowers because of the difficulty of duplicating nutrient deficient specific sites (not to mention the high cost of seed), Australian gardeners have made do with imports from the Northern Hemisphere.

## Americans started the trend

It was the Americans who first turned their commercial eyes to the production of wildflowers, no doubt because their continent is blessed with a huge diversity of plants from the dry Mediterranean parts of California, where Californian Poppies grow, to the humid north-east where New England Asters and Coneflowers thrive. It has created such an enthusiastic response that home gardeners can now buy wildflower meadow seeds in a can off the shelf, just like orange juice!

Digger's Seeds first offered wildflowers about eight years ago, but it is only recently that demand has reached a stage where large economical packages have been offered, so that areas as large as 100 square metres and even hectares can be sown.

At the garden of Heronswood (from which Digger's Seeds operates) Flanders Poppies and Californian Poppies have become naturalised after the first plantings of wildflowers six years ago. In that typical Mediterranean climatic pattern, hardy annuals are sown in autumn and flower throughout spring and early summer. Experiments with dozens of wildflowers have established mixtures and species that thrive in southern Australian gardens.

## What is a wildflower?

For a wildflower to be offered for sale by Digger's it must be an unimproved species with a long flowering period. It must germinate readily and be economical to buy, so that gardeners can purchase large quantities of seed for sowing directly as a meadow (this is the reason why Australian native flowers are not offered — the cost of the seed is prohibitive).

## The Natural Life Cycle

For this form of gardening to be successful one needs to understand the local climate. Hardy annuals have a life cycle that allows seeds to germinate in late autumn or early spring when soil moisture is high ➡



## ***Wildflowers, the Latest Trend in Gardening, continued***

and soil temperatures are low. They flower quickly, in eight to twelve weeks, before the onset of hot weather which ripens the seeds that fall naturally to the ground in late summer, ready to repeat the annual cycle. By following the natural cycle wildflower gardening is remarkably easy and a beautifully effective way of covering large areas.

### **The cheapest form of flower gardening**

Because Digger's Seeds grows perennials and annuals as well as wildflowers they have been able to prepare a comparison of the costs and work involved in producing some most unexpected results. While it may cost \$15 for a packet of wildflower seeds to cover a 100 square metre area, it is only one-twentieth the cost of planting bedding plants, estimated to be \$300. Planted with 900 perennials the cost would be \$2,250. The saving in money is reinforced by the saving in time because wildflowers do not need the highly fertile soils required to grow bedding plants and perennials, so there is no need to buy fertilisers or to mulch the area. By careful preparation of the area (having a weed-free soil is imperative) and sowing at the correct time all the work associated with bedding plants and perennials is saved. So not only is wildflower gardening the cheapest form of gardening, it represents the least amount of work.

### **Planting wildflowers versus annuals and perennials**

100 sq m comparison	wildflowers	annuals/ vegetables	perennials
Plants/seeds	100 gm seed	900 seedlings	900 plants
Cost of plants/seeds	\$15	\$300	\$2250
Soil preparation	spray only 1/2 hr twice	dig 4 hours	Dig 4 hours
Sowing/planting time	1/2 hour	8 hours	8 hours
Mulching/fertilising	nil	4 hours	4 hours
Weeding time	2 hours	4 hours	4 hours

As a testament to the success of wildflower gardening, the display site at Heronswood has now not been sown since 1989 because the display produced so many seeds and hardly any weeds that it has now become almost totally maintenance free.

In America it is the landscapers that are the most enthusiastic supporters of wildflowers, creating novel approaches to the problems of bed preparation and sowing. Instead of planting trees and shrubs on their freeways or along the edges of their golf courses, wildflowers are now literally sprayed onto the banks in liquid slurry form and left to naturalise.

### **A whole garden in a packet**

Digger's Seeds has built up a great deal of experience in balancing heights, colours and flowering periods so that combinations of wildflowers are now offered in mixtures. With the benefit of economy of sowing wildflowers is the concept of sowing a **whole garden in a packet!** But before you start tearing up your nature strip or lawn it is vital to follow the growing guidelines carefully (see below).

### **GROW YOUR OWN WILDFLOWER MEADOW**

**Effective weed control is absolutely essential to the success of any planting.** The area must be free of weeds prior to sowing. By cultivating the area and watering all soil-borne seeds should germinate and be ready for a spray with Roundup/Zero in three weeks (or easily contained by the use of a Dutch hoe). A repeat treatment is usually necessary for complete control. We prefer to do this in autumn but early spring is just as effective if timed two weeks after the first weeds emerge. We have also laid down newspapers to block light from emerging weed seeds and covered them with a fine layer (2-3 cm) of soil. Seedling roots break through readily.

**Time to sow.** Late autumn or early spring (but after effective weed control). Our wildflower areas re-germinate naturally in early April and late August when soil temperatures are about 12 degrees Celsius. In Sydney, Adelaide and Perth a May or July sowing would be best. At this time moisture levels are high and sowings probably won't need supplementary watering. Sowings as late as October or November are usually less successful because daily watering is needed.

**When sowing the seed it is vital that soil and seed make contact.** The growing of wildflowers is no different from sowing vegetable seeds at home or the large scale growing of wheat. A well prepared friable soil that is free of weeds ensures successful establishment.

**Many wildflower seeds are as fine as dust** and it can be difficult to sow recommended areas evenly. Mix the seed with dry sand or sugar, using two to five times the weight of seed so spreading is easier. Most packets specify areas to be covered but if not sow approximately 850 seeds per square metre or 75 seeds per square foot. Denser sowings produce weak spindly seedlings and lighter sowings may not provide adequate cover.

**After annuals flower and set seeds** cut plants to the ground with a lawn mower. If seeds re-emerge in late autumn without weeds no more work will be needed for a great display next spring. If weeds do appear Roundup/Zero the area and resow in late autumn or early spring. Annuals begin flowering in eight to twelve weeks, perennials usually take sixteen to twenty-four weeks. Water and weed as required.





# To create a beautiful garden, join the club

If you are working harder and enjoying it less it's probably because you keep making the same mistakes. You're probably planting annual seedlings rather than perennials which take twice the work. If you grow perennials and mulch them the weeding's almost eliminated! Are you disappointed that your plants flower at the wrong time and the colours clash? Well, these are easy matters to fix for in gardening it's what you know that leads to success not how much you do. That's why we've just written *Best Garden Ideas* to help you succeed.

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# How Plant Aromas Improve Your Health

by Nancy BECKHAM

*"The use of scents is not practised in modern medicine, but might be carried out with advantage, seeing that some smells are so depressing and others so inspiring and reviving."*

— Sir William Temple (1690)

## The Science of Smell

It is known that aromas act as chemical messengers but the precise way this occurs in humans is not yet known.

For insects and many animals, smells are the major means of communication as they warn of danger, indicate food sources, establish boundaries, identify family members, give information about finding a partner, function as navigational aids and regulate behaviour. These types of aromas are called pheromones and



(above) *Rothmannia globosa* (Tree Gardenia)



(left) *Backhousia citriodora* (Sweet Verbena)

photos: Nancy Beckham

they are responsible for the total social structure of some insects, such as bees.

Insect pheromones are not noticed by humans but some are extremely potent to particular insects; a male moth may be attracted to a tiny speck of a female sex pheromone located 7 km distant.

Once pheromones have been isolated by scientists, they can be used for controlling insect behaviour and



about 50 pheromones are now being utilised for this purpose. For example, a specific female insect pheromone can be sprayed on trees and this causes such a degree of male confusion that mating is markedly disrupted. This type of insect control is not toxic to the environment or to humans and it can be more effective than routine spraying with insecticides. I presume that it is not more widely used because of economical and technical reasons.

It is known that some women become extremely attractive to mosquitoes between days 13 and 18 of the menstrual cycle, and from my own bushwalking days I noticed that some people seem to be generally less appealing to biting insects. If we could find out the human substance they don't like then this could be used as an insect repellent. Meantime, you might like to try Pennyroyal or Lavender. You can buy the oil and rub it over your skin before you start gardening or pick some leaves, crush them in your hands and rub them over exposed areas of skin.

Some male animals, notably pigs, goats and monkeys, are known to be attracted or disturbed by human female odours. Most females would have had somewhat embarrassing experiences with sniffing male dogs. However, most pheromones are effective only within like species and they have quite specific functions.

Arthur Hasley, an American scientist, noted that when he walked in a particular forest, the river surrounds seemed to have a unique odour. He was intrigued by the fact that it brought back strong feelings of his childhood walks in the same locality. He related this to the puzzle of how salmon, after swimming thousands of miles in the ocean, could find their way back to a particular mountain stream. When this was followed up, it was found that tagged salmon actually returned to their specific birthplace. Somehow they have the memory of the particular river bed fragrance embedded in them.

In human experiments, people were asked to recall events brought to mind by neutral words such as

"house", and as they heard the words they were given a discreet whiff of a fragrance. Pleasant fragrances brought on pleasant memories while the nasty smells evoked unpleasant memories. Positive thinking has been recommended as human therapy by just about every wise person for thousands of years so you could think of your garden giving you "thought therapy" or what scientists call cognitive restructuring!

Other studies showed that when a human male pheromone was sprayed on waiting room seats, females chose those seats and males avoided them. Scientists at Warwick University found that when stress management therapy was given at the same time as the release of chemicals that smelt like the sea, the patients associated the sea smell with holidays and pleasant experiences. Subsequently, whiffs of the sea perfume were enough to stave off attacks of anxiety.

Ordinary people are said to be able to identify around 2,000 different odours whereas trained "sniffers" can identify around 10,000. Helen Keller was said to be able to identify people by their smell, and under laboratory test conditions the majority of subjects can identify their own T-shirts.

You will have experienced for yourselves how particular smells can bring back a flood of memories; for example, newly mown grass may trigger thoughts of a childhood holiday in the country.

In other words, smells have a powerful link to memory and to those really important things such as how you feel about yourself and how you relate to the world around you.. It would be unrealistic to imagine that we were the only living things not influenced by airborne chemical messengers, and this may partly explain some of our irrational behaviour.

Plants also release pheromones which are not detected by humans. Carefully controlled experiments have shown that certain species of trees change their internal chemistry when they are attacked by insects so that the leaves don't taste as appetising to those particular pests. Trees up to 100 metres away, which were not being

attacked, also changed their plant chemistry in an effort to deter these insects. The researcher suggested that these trees may have the capacity to produce pheromonal signals which travel through the air to warn other trees. The ability of plants to initiate their own chemical defences is being increasingly studied and is known as allelochemicals. Publications such as **Recent Advances in Phytochemistry** give details of this sort of research. This defensive capacity in plants is obviously not well developed otherwise pests would not be able to destroy them.

## Aromatherapy

This relates to the use of essential oils for human therapeutic purposes, although a broader meaning is the use of aromas to improve wellbeing.

Essential oils are found in plants and are responsible for the unique fragrance of each type of plant. Each plant's odour is actually a particular combination of up to 50 complex compounds.

These essential oils are not oily like olive oil. They are also known as aromatic essences or volatile oils because they are identifiable by smell and evaporate in the presence of air and heat. Up to now, the most efficient way of extracting them has been by distillation but new techniques are now being developed. The quantities of oils found in plants depend on the species of plant, the season, soil, temperature and so on.

It takes about 30 roses to produce one drop of pure rose oil, so you can appreciate that a tiny bottle will cost hundreds of dollars. Many of the cheaper oils are now concocted in laboratories but most aromatherapists say that these do not have the same therapeutic effect. The "Aussie oils" such as Tea Tree and Eucalyptus are internationally renowned for their antiseptic qualities; they are relatively inexpensive because they are found within the plant in large quantities.

Particular localities have a reputation for producing plants with the highest quality aromas, such as Bulgarian roses, Ceylonese cinnamon, West Indian lemongrass and northern NSW tea tree.



## ***How Plant Aromas Improve Your Health, continued***

Aromatherapists use the oils for massaging, in baths, as inhalations, pot pourri, gargles, perfume or on the skin, and a few of them are used internally. You need to remember that essential oils are highly concentrated plant extracts so you need to follow the instructions for their use. There are many books available on the subject of aromatherapy and a few recommended ones are:

**Aromatherapy**, Lautie R. DSc and Passebecq A, MD, DPs (Thorsons) 1979. A practical little book covering 60 of the aromatic oils.

**The Art of Aromatherapy**, Tisserand R> (C.W. Daniel), Revised Edition 1987. Covers a wide range of topics including history, research data, massage techniques, how to combine the oils and a very detailed account of 30 oils.

**The Practice of Aromatherapy**, Valnet J. MD (Destiny Books) 1982. Aromatherapy as used by a French medical practitioner with some interesting scientific information as well as details on 40 essential oils.

### **Green Therapy**

Gardens give you exercise (sometimes too much!) and provide a wide range of therapeutic benefits including the simple pleasure of looking at them, providing medicinal and edible plants, generating oxygen, providing privacy, giving shade and so on.

You can also use perfumed plants to improve your health, bearing in mind that scientific research has verified that odours are chemical messengers which have the capacity to modify our moods.

It has been demonstrated in humans that when an odour rated as "very pleasant" was placed under the nostrils, increased bursts of activity were shown on the surface of the right hemisphere of the brain. Shortly after the odour was removed, there was a similar burst of activity - as if the brain was confirming that the smell had been pleasant. In other words, to get a beneficial effect all you have to do is

to sniff something which you find pleasant.

Research has shown that some plant aromas have a sedating effect, such as chamomile, clary-sage, lavender, lemon balm and marjoram. Stimulating aromas include bergamot, basil, jasmine, pine, rosemary and thyme. Rose is generally considered to be balancing.

There are hundreds of aromatic plants to choose from, including herbs such as angelica, lemon verbena, mints, pineapple sage, sweet cicely and sweet woodruff.

My favourite aromatic plant is the climber *Stephanotis leptopus* (Madagascar Jasmine) which produces clumps of pure white, waxy funnel-form flowers in summer. It likes a protected, warm area, a rich and well drained soil and plenty of summer moisture. The best specimens I have seen are growing in full shade in large containers. It is not a rampant climber but it does need support and the stems are quite brittle so you need to handle it carefully. The perfume is heavy and sweet. Jasmine is sometimes called the "king of the aromatics". Some people find this type of perfume too rich and others get allergic reactions to the jasmines and many perfumed plants. Irrespective of their beauty or merits, any plant which causes you adverse reactions is best avoided.

Rose is known as the "queen of the aromatics" and is widely used in perfumes. A common complaint is that roses do not smell as sweet as they used to. I think you will find that varieties such as 'Mr Lincoln', 'Double Delight', 'Fragrant Cloud' and 'Sutter's Gold' are still just as fragrant; you need to remember that your sense of smell diminishes with age. Some roses have a delicate perfume which is only noticeable in humidity so if you place them in a bowl of water and cover it for a while you will be pleasantly surprised when you take off the cover.

A number of writers say that when the black plague was rampant in Europe during the Middle Ages the people who worked with dried aromatic flowers in the perfumery trade did not come down with the

disease. I would not be surprised if this were true because a feature of plant essential oils is that many of them are powerful germicides. Under laboratory test conditions pure rose oil for example, is extremely effective at killing a range of harmful organisms.

Port Wine Magnolia (*Michelia figo*) is another richly aromatic plant. Some nursery labels say it grows to three metres but I have one that is five metres high and almost as wide. In the spring it gets smallish, wine coloured flowers which emit a strong perfume in late afternoon and evening. You can pick the flowers before they open and place them in a bowl inside your house so that in the evening the whole house will be filled with a rich, unusual fragrance.

Small citrus trees are worth growing in large containers in courtyards, on balconies or near windows so that you can benefit from their fragrant flowers as well as eat the fruit. Tahitian limes, cumquats, calamondins and Meyer lemons are suitable for this purpose.

Native trees with pleasant aromas include *Backhousia citriodora* (Sweet Verbena), *Hymenosporum flavum* (Native Frangipani) and *Pittosporum undulatum* (Native Daphne). Perfumed native shrubs include *Acacia suaveolens* (Sweet scented Wattle) and *Darwinia citriodora* (Lemon scented Myrtle). The boronias and prostantheras in particular send out waves of fragrance on warm days so that you get more perfume in the surrounding air than by sniffing the plant itself.

This is just a brief coverage of one aspect of green therapy. Having an appropriate selection of perfumed plants can add to the health benefits which you get from your garden.

This talk of aromas reminds me of a little story:

Jock McGregor lay dying; he hadn't eaten for days for fear of wearing out his new false teeth. A delicious aroma of haggis reached his nostrils and, weakly, he cried out "Oh, Annie me luv, I tink I could manage a wee morsel of that haggis". It's nae good asking" screeched Annie from the kitchen, "I bought it for ye funeral tea".







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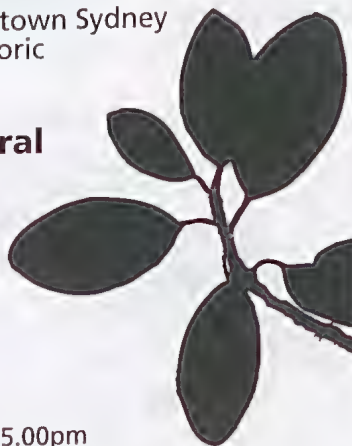
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## A National Conference

The first HRA National Conference will be held in Castlemaine, Victoria, from 22nd to 24th November 1991; people from all over Australia with a love of and interest in old roses will gather in this historic town in Victoria's central goldfields.

A three-day program has been devised to cover field trips, lectures, workshops, a botanic garden stroll, garden tours, a gala dinner, national and international speakers, and a garden party in the grounds of Buda Historic Home.

The program will focus on the history of Australian rose breeding, growing old roses across the country, and successful rose preservation projects. Speakers will include Peter Cuffley, Tom Garnett, Sarah Guest, Ian Huxley, Susan Irvine, John Nieuwesteeg, Trevor Nottle, Robert Peace, Suzanne Price, Deane Ross, David Ruston, Maureen Timson, Kevin Walsh and Clive Winmill. Charles Walker jnr, the founder of the Heritage Rose Foundation in the USA, will be international guest speaker.



A feature of the Conference will be "Our Silent Past — Australia's Heritage of Unnamed Roses", a major display in which HRA groups and individuals from all over Australia will contribute unnamed roses or roses that are known only by "local" names. This will be the first time that these roses have been brought

together for display, and a working party will co-ordinate identification consensus, naming and a permanent photographic record.

The Conference is open to all with a love of old roses, whether they are members of HRA or not.

**Venue:** Castlemaine Town Hall, Lyttleton Street, Castlemaine.

**Cost:** \$295.00 (includes all lectures, choice of two small group lectures, field trips, all lunches, refreshments and the Conference dinner).

**Booking agent:** Brenda McDonald, McTravel, Castlemaine, Vic. 3450; tel (054)72.4444.




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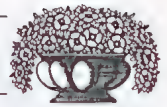
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# TEN COMMANDMENTS *of* GARDEN DESIGN

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*by Suzanne PRICE*

**T**he designing of a garden is one area in which many people feel that they need some guidance. This is very understandable, for when faced with a bare block it is hard to know where to begin if you have no background in gardening. Some people seek advice immediately. Others, knowing that they must do something with that space between the house walls and the fence first buy plants to screen the boundaries. Lack of knowledge leads them to purchase trees to screen their fences, and the first mistake has been made. The fenceline, or close to it, is one place where trees should never be planted in an urban garden. The next step is to plant against the house walls all the plants which have been kindly donated, along with anything else that takes the fancy. Some home owners, who are not gardeners at heart, stop at this stage thinking that the garden is completed.

Others, once the house and boundary beds have been filled, continue to plant, extending the garden progressively as their enthusiasm grows. Some of these unplanned gardens are successful because the owner has a natural feel for plants and an artistic eye. The end product looks as if the garden was deliberately designed in an informal style. More often, however,

it will be a clutter of uncomfortable groupings. At some stage the owners will look round and wonder "What next?" They know it isn't right but are not sure how to proceed.

The same feeling of inadequacy can be experienced when confronted with an established garden which needs renovating or re-designing. There are so many questions which require answers before you can begin. Which plants are worth retaining? Which should be removed? What is good about the original design (if there was one)?

The solution of the problem where to begin lies in your approach. If you can view the garden as a vital element of the environment in which you live and if you consider that you will derive great pleasure from it, then you will be prepared to give it as much forethought as any other major project.

The construction of a garden should be no more haphazard than the construction of a house. You would not build a kitchen and then, deciding that you needed a living room, find a place where it would fit; or being given a bed, build a bedroom to put it in. Even if a house is to be constructed in stages, it is done so according to a well prepared and clearly defined plan, and so it should be with a garden.

If a garden is unplanned it is unlikely that the end product will have that satisfying sense of cohesion that is experienced in a well planned garden, where the garden and the house seem right for one another and all the plants are compatibly placed.

The plan for your garden does not need to be elaborate. It can be a simple sketch, and can be drawn with little difficulty once you understand the principles and have decided what requirements and expectations you have of the garden.

The principles really cover two quite separate areas; the principles of garden design, which must be understood before the planning begins, and the principles of gardening itself. Only the design principles concern us at this stage.

Some of these are not new; they have been stated many times throughout the history of gardening. Others have evolved hand in hand with the change towards owner-maintenance. The rest have been developed to cater for the specific problems of urban gardening. Several are open to interpretation and may be incorporated into your garden in the way which suits you best; they provide guidelines rather than specific step-by-step instructions. Gardens are private and personal, and no two should ever be alike. ➡



## **Ten Commandments of Garden Design, continued**

### **The Ten Commandments**

#### **1. The house and garden should complement one another.**

Together the house and garden become the home, so the house should not be more conspicuous than the garden, but should blend so that it appears to have grown up in the garden along with all the plants. The ideal way to achieve this is to design the house and garden together. But this is rarely possible. Nor does it often happen that a house can be built in an existing garden with which it can blend immediately. More often we have a house and must plan and plant a garden which will grow up around it.

The secret is to produce a balance — between the house and its trees,

and between the size and shapes of the trees which are used. Some of the trees need to be taller than the highest point of the roof, but no tree should be so tall that it dominates the house. The trees which are taller than the house do not need to be close to it. They will look attractive if some of the branches reach over the roof here and there, and if used in this way will help to insulate the house in summer. However, they will drop their leaves into the gutters in autumn and if they are too close to the house the roots may eventually invade the foundations. A compromise may be reached whereby the larger trees are placed so that their branches will, when fully grown, reach out to the roof without actually touching or overhanging it.

Shrubs can also be used to unite the house and garden. A shrub which hugs the wall to disguise an ugly downpipe seems to become part of the house. If the same species is used elsewhere as well, perhaps

grouped as a boundary screen, a visible connection is made between house and garden. The plants which are used to blend the house into the garden can also serve to make the house look more attractive. For example, broad leaved evergreens will hide undesirable aspects of the house; the eyes will look away from the solid green towards lighter, more dainty leaved plants which should be placed near attractive features of the house, to highlight them.

Climbing plants clinging to the walls and draping themselves along verandahs complete the unifying effect. If these are encouraged to reach out from the house walls to twine through or dangle from trees and shrubs they will physically tie the house and garden together.

The man made features within the garden can also help to make house and garden compatible. Paving should match or tone in with the house bricks or paint. Timbers for pergolas, arches



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and arbours should be of a similar size and shape to those used externally on the house. Any roofed structure should have a roof line which imitates that of the house.

## 2. The garden needs a good outline and framework.

The garden must be designed so that a solid structure is built up, becoming increasingly evident as trees and shrubs mature. The trunks and branches are the skeleton around and beneath which the garden is developed and should always be placed within the garden, and never around the edges.

The trees should be placed so that in time they will reach your boundaries but without extending beyond them, unless your garden adjoins parkland, forest or farm land. Conferring with neighbours and planning for two gardens to "share" trees is a good idea in theory, but there is always a risk that future owners may not want your trees overhanging their garden.

Shrubs contribute to the garden's outline and framework by forming the walls around and within the garden. Some of these are likely to be dense and evergreen to provide privacy and wind protection, but some will be light and open and should be included to allow glimpses of what is beyond. Some can be tall enough to be a complete screen.

Once again, balance is essential. A garden is monotonous if in the upper level all the trees are the same height and shape, and if all the shrubs in the eye level zone are also the same height and shape. But this does not mean that every tree and shrub should be of a different species; this would result in a cluttered, disunified effect. Groupings of a number of carefully chosen species will provide both balance and variety.

## 3. All space should be used effectively and efficiently.

The overhead space takes care of itself once you have decided how much of your garden, if any, will require a canopy and the trees have been placed accordingly. The eye

level zone is accounted for once the garden has been segmented. To achieve the state where all ground space is used effectively, or at least efficiently, you must first define what your needs are.

Once the amount of space actually required for such things as service areas, vegetables, play areas, outdoor living and lawn has been allocated, all else will be garden. If your service area is too large it will become untidy and weed infested; if the lawn area is too large it will require too much maintenance. And if each garden area is not fully planted — if there is any bare earth — it will attract weeds and require continual maintenance.

## 4. An interesting garden is not seen in a single glance.

This is a classic garden design principle. No matter how small your allotment, neither the front garden nor the back garden should be able to be seen in a single sweep of the eyes. It should be segmented so that separate pictures can be partially hidden from each other, but not in such a way that fences or solid green walls chop it up into uniform segments. It is better if each area allows a glimpse of another so that you feel enticed to venture further. The "rooms" within your garden should vary in size and shape, and the "walls" and peninsulas of shrubs should be of varying heights and shapes and textures. Some can be straight, even clipped, while others may be curved and graceful.

Rows or groups of one species can also contain a single plant of a species that is grouped elsewhere; in this way the plants which divide the garden into separate areas also provide cohesion and balance.

Surprisingly, segmenting your garden in this way makes it seem larger than it really is, because there always seems more to see and further to go.

## 5. The garden should contain a variety of colours, shapes, sizes and textures.

You should now turn your attention to the foliage and flowers of the plants so that you incorporate a

pleasing assortment of each. Here again, some restraint is required for the aim is not to grow a collection but to arrange a selection of plants that will complement each other. Once again, balance is the key to ensuring that your garden is satisfying and the plants look right together.

## 6. The plants should be suitable.

In relation to design this means that all the plants should suit the overall style of the garden, and that they should be suitable for the climate and soil and for the aspect in which they are placed. Never use a plant just because it is suitable for the climate and the soil, or because it seems right, or because it has been given to you or because it is fashionable, unless you like it enough to live with it.

## 7. Each section of the garden should be picture-planned.

Instead of having individual plants featuring at different times and making little impact, each area should provide a full picture in its season.

Picture-planning is the art of co-ordinating flowering time, colour, shape, size and texture so that each plant is compatible with those around it and each contributes to the total effect.

Each section of the garden should also provide a secondary picture or season of interest, for urban gardens are generally too small to allow any area to be uninteresting for three seasons. There are many simple ways in which a secondary display may be provided; by the autumn colours of various plants in the grouping; by the blooming of the screening shrubs which provided a green backdrop for the picture or of the ground plants which carpeted the main display; by bulbs, perennials or annuals planted for just this purpose; or by the flowering of light growing climbers which are allowed to scramble through the trees and shrubs. Picture-planning ensures that at all times of the year there is at least one co-ordinated combination of plants rather than isolated incidental points of interest.



## **Ten Commandments of Garden Design,** *continued*

### **8. Edges and corners should be softened.**

If you desire a completely formal garden this principle is not for you, but the majority of urban gardeners prefer their garden to be informal, part formal or semi formal.

Because nature rarely produces a truly straight line, a perfect circle or a really smooth curve, many gardeners will make all edges irregular, or irregular lines will have a regular pattern in them. Possibly a better approach is to begin with a straight line or a smooth curve and allow the plants to flow or tumble over the edges. In this way the harshness of the lines and of the garden as a whole is mellowed and softened.

### **9. A garden is to be enjoyed.**

Many people find that they actually enjoy not just the garden for its own sake but also the work involved in its upkeep. Nevertheless, the design and the plant selection should be aimed at keeping the maintenance as low as possible. It should reach the stage when, if you don't feel like gardening, it doesn't matter.

There is also a great deal of satisfaction to be derived from a garden; the satisfaction of creating beauty, of designing living works of art, of tempering the environment, of developing a healthy environment in which to live, or of producing safe food for the family.

### **10. A garden is never finished.**

A garden, once it is planned and planted, is not static. As it grows

older it changes and so do conditions within the garden. Some plants which were appropriate in the beginning may need to be removed, but others which could not be used initially may be added. It is not just the garden which changes; the gardener changes as well. Your needs will change, your knowledge of plants will increase, and your skill at picture-planning will improve. You will learn to add new and interesting plants without losing the thread of the design. Your garden and your gardening will become an ever changing, ever developing, ever improving, and a never finished part of your life.

These ten design principles all have more to do with how your garden will look than how you will look after it, although some will facilitate maintenance. They are all applicable whether you are starting







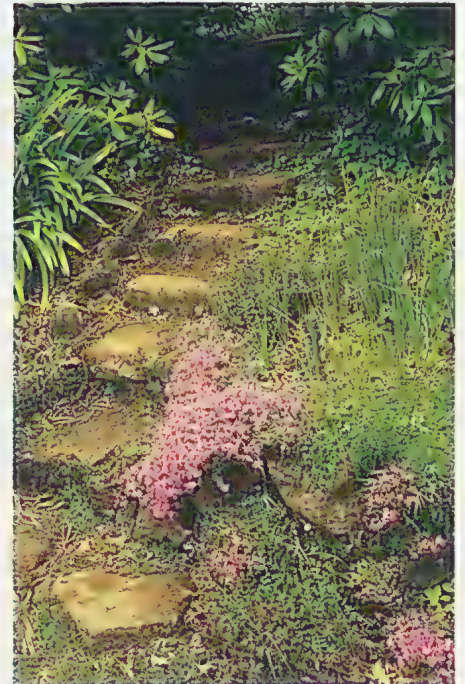
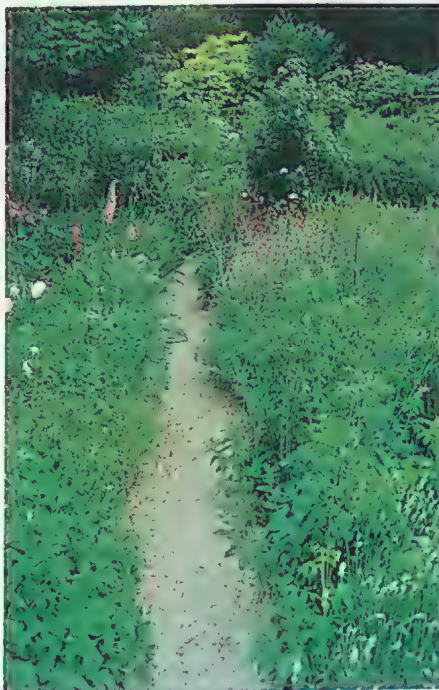
a garden from scratch, rejuvenating or completely re-designing an old garden, adding to a garden, or just altering a section of the garden. Gardens designed according to these principles will have that most important element of a good garden — balance — in every regard. There will be a balance between the house and the garden. There will be a balanced selection of trees, shrubs, climbers and ground plants. And the most delicate yet most vital balance of all will be achieved; a balance between variety in the garden and flow throughout the garden. Too much variety is unsettling and results in a clutter, and yet too little variety creates monotony. The delicate balance between variety and flow is the key to good garden design.

*(opposite page) House and garden should complement each other.*

*(above) The garden should contain a variety of colours, shapes, sizes and textures.*

*(below left) All space should be used effectively and efficiently.*

*(below right) Edges and corners should be softened.*



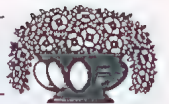
*Note: The above is a condensed version of one chapter in a new book by Suzanne Price, the tentative title of which is "The Urban Garden".*







## GARDEN CUTTINGS



### **Drying tomatoes**

To dry tomatoes, simply cut them in halves or quarters and lay them skin-side down on a tray of fibreglass screen or shade cloth fastened to a frame. Skins can be removed if desired by first dipping whole tomatoes in boiling water for a few seconds. Drying usually takes three or four sunny days; bring the tomatoes indoors at night and in cloudy weather. To maintain a bright red colour tomato pieces can be blanched in lemon juice before drying.

Sun-dried tomatoes can be stored in airtight jars or sealed freezer bags at room temperature or in a refrigerator; they are easily reconstituted for sauces and salads by soaking briefly in water. They can also be marinated in olive oil with herbs and seasonings in sealed sterilized jars.

### **Bio-processed crops**

An extension of tissue culture techniques involves the growing of just the most useful part of a plant, without producing the whole plant. At Texas Tech University a team of biologists has succeeded in growing cotton fibres from individual cotton cells. Unspecialized cells, taken from any part of the plant, are cultured in nutrient-hormone agar until a callus is formed. Pieces of callus are then grown in a sugar-mineral-hormone mix where they develop fibres of uniform length and thickness. Since they are grown in a sterile medium these can be woven directly into bandages.

USDA researchers in California have used enzymes in tissue culture to "grow" orange juice and cherry pulp. Scientists now envisage food factories which would use wood from plantations of fast growing trees and shrubs. They are seeking a chemical digestion system to turn the sugar polymers in the ligno-cellulose in the wood into simple sugars; these would then be used by genetically engineered cells to make specific foods.

### **Light gardening**

Many types of artificial light sources are used in growing plants, but all have disadvantages, such as excessive energy costs, heat production and imbalances in light rays.

Light-emitting diodes (LEDs) are now being tested at the Wisconsin Center for Space Automation and Robotics in a co-operative project with the University of Wisconsin's Department of Horticulture and Automated Agricultural Associates.

Gallium-aluminium-arsenide LEDs produce radiation in the red range used by plants, but since plants also use blue wavelengths the LED light was supplemented with blue fluorescents. Two advantages were noted for the LED system; they are made with internal reflectors which direct their radiation towards the plant more efficiently, and the electrical conversion efficiency of the system is approximately twice that of fluorescent systems.

As LED technology advances it may be possible to produce systems that emit blue as well as red radiation so as to produce the exact wavelengths of light needed for optimum growth.

### **City composting**

Some States in USA now ban garden wastes from landfills, thus spurring interest in municipal composting. A report in the New York Times stated that as much as 70% of municipal solid wastes are compostable. Even disposable nappies may join the recycling stream; Proctor and Gamble in USA is spending \$US20 million to develop a disposable nappy that will break down completely into humus when composted.

### **Flower of the Year 1991**

Bedding Plants Australia has chosen a *Portulaca* as Flower of the Year 1991. Called 'Cocktail' it will be released across Australia on 1st October, the first *Portulaca* to be

selected. This is a new variety which includes seven different colours and an extended flowering period even after direct sun has gone. The blooms are also bigger than in most other *Portulacas*.

### **Farming alternatives for the '90s.**

The 40th Australian National Field Days, to be held near Orange in New South Wales from 12th to 14th November, incorporate a Feature Demonstration to provide practical alternatives and innovative ideas. These may include using renovated shearing quarters or cottages for farm holidays, breeding fish or yabbies in farm dams, harvesting of eucalypt or tea tree oils, making jam or juice from what would otherwise have been wasted fruit.

### **Australian Network for Plant Conservation**

A co-ordinating office has now been established at the Australian National Botanic Gardens for the newly founded Australian Network for Plant Conservation. This will seek to co-ordinate species-level research with the management of eco-systems and draw together the efforts of many organisations using different methods to conserve diversity. Such methods include legal protection, land acquisition and management, research, re-introduction and rehabilitation, and public education. It will place Australia among the forerunners in managing their rare or threatened plant species and direct further research into our threatened flora in those areas where effort is required. The Network will include botanic gardens, zoological gardens, universities, national parks and wildlife services, the forestry, mining and nursery industries, and a variety of non-government organisations. Amateur enthusiasts will also be encouraged.



# CULINARY CONNECTIONS

by *Gail THOMAS*

**W**hen asked where my interest in gardening stems the answer has to be my stomach! As a chef who gardens, rather than a gardener who cooks, my main focus is on edible plantings. Even my earliest recollections of gardening as a child were the little crops of radishes and carrots I diligently tended.

A garden is a valuable asset to any chef and offers the opportunity of growing crops which provide the ultimate in freshness as well as being able to harvest them at the exact point of maturity you require. Another advantage is being able to grow and have access to ingredients which are not grown commercially, thus broadening your culinary horizons.

The close relationship between wine, food and gardening sees many keen gardeners growing and experimenting, both in the garden and the kitchen. Consequently when visiting a particular region my foremost priority is to seek out any specific regional foods and wines.

Victoria's Otway region is noted for its spectacular views and varied attractions which ensure there is something to interest everyone. Colac is known as the gateway to the Otways, and located on the southern shore of Lake Colac are the Botanical Gardens. Lake Colac is the largest natural freshwater lake in Victoria and its picturesque setting is complemented by the pelicans and other water birds which have made the lake their home. It is also well stocked with redfin and perch. The land for the gardens was originally reserved by the Government in 1865 and the plans were prepared in 1910 by W.R. Guilfoyle. A feature of the 15 ha of gardens which overlook the lake is that they have been designed for cars to drive around. There is also a childrens playground, barbecue and toilet facilities.

As well as the significant trees in the Gardens there is one of particular note behind the Memorial Square in the city centre. In front of it is a plaque, the inscription on which reads "Aleppo Pine (*Pinus brutia*) from the original Lone Pine on Gallipoli. Grown in the Jubilee Year 1965. Planted in memory of departed comrades. Lest we Forget".

Taking the Gellibrand road from Colac to Barongarook brings you to the Barongavale Winery, the only winery in the Otways. It was established in

1981 by Eileen and Stuart Walker, with cellar door sales commencing in 1987.

Stuart has lived in Colac since 1956, and has always been an avid gardener, providing the family with fresh, organically grown vegetables. In 1974 an overabundance of fruit prompted him into using this excess to make fruit wine, with the aid of literature from the local library!

In 1980 Stuart and Eileen purchased the land at Barongarook and began growing a range of berries as well as conventional wine grape varieties.

There are about 2.5 ha under vine, with about 0.5 ha devoted to berries. The region has a history of grape growing, from around the turn of the century, when there were three or four small vineyards in the area as well as one at Deans Marsh, and a larger one 15 km north of Colac. Although little wine was made the grapes were mainly sent to the Alvie railhead and shipped on to other areas. Apart from being the only winery in the Otways, Barongavale can also boast of being one of the few producing berry wines from fruit grown on the property. This not only gives the visitor a unique opportunity to sample something different, but during the fruiting season, from around mid December to the end of February, fresh berries are available for purchase, or you may even pick your own. And of course there are always homemade berry jams for sale.

Barongavale is 300 metres above sea level, and during the growing season has cool nights and warm days. The average summer temperature is around 24 degrees Celsius, although the summer is short. The average rainfall is 800 mm, and in the dry months of January and February the berries are irrigated with water from the dam. Birds are also a problem, so the vines and brambles are all netted.

All plantings run north-south, and in the cooler months oats are grown between the rows of vines and berries, then ploughed back as a green manure crop in spring.

At grape harvest time, around late March and early April, friends and relatives lend a hand, and as the region is also a dairying one, Stuart has been able to obtain stainless steel milk cans for use in the winery.



## *Culinary Connections, continued*

My attention was drawn to some marionberry jam in the tasting area. Marionberries are one of my favourites and I have been growing them at home for some years; they tend to be less rampant than other brambles.

All the berries grown at Barongavale are cultivated, not wild. As well as marionberries there are blackberries, kroonberries (also known as silvanberry or American blackberry), lawtonberries (the latest to ripen), youngberries, boysenberries, raspberries and a small quantity of black currants.

Fruit wines are often thought of as being rich and liqueur-like; these are sometimes infusions of fruit into an alcoholic base with added sugar syrup. I sometimes make them in this way by placing the fruit in a wide-mouth jar and covering it with brandy. Seal and leave for a few months; by this time the fruit will have broken down but can be strained off and served as a dessert. The remaining fruit flavoured brandy is then mixed with an equal amount of sugar syrup (equal quantities of sugar and water, boiled to dissolve the sugar then allowed to cool). Less syrup can be used for a less sweet liqueur.

Stuart Walker makes all his berry wines by fermenting the fruit, then ageing it for 18 months in whisky barrels. The added flavour from the whisky in the wood gives further complexity to the wines, which have a light, almost rose colour with fruit overtones and a clean, dry finish, making them suitable for accompanying savoury as well as dessert dishes.

Stuart makes a blackberry wine in both sweet and dry styles and a combined blackberry and raspberry wine in a dry style. With bottle age the wines develop a little more sweetness, resulting in an almost tawny port style. He also makes a black currant wine in limited amounts. Black currants are another favourite for the home gardener, likewise red and white currants; the latter have a clean, almost horseradish taste, making them an excellent accompaniment to savoury dishes. I like to serve them with freshly opened oysters on a bed of edible black seaweed.

About four km on from Barongavale winery is the Old Beechy Bakery, where a wood fire oven, around 100 years old, is used to bake a delicious array of breads, including sourdough, Danish rye and the old fashioned high top loaves, as well as an assortment of buns, French sticks, kibble, wholemeal and fruit loaves. Elaine and Bob Elliott have owned the bakery only since 1989 and took it on as a challenge, having no experience in baking.

The oven, made by Sandbridge in Melbourne, has the Australian coat of arms on one side and a crown on

the other. It takes about two barrow loads of wood to heat the oven, and once the required temperature is reached the fire is put out and the bread is cooked from the heat of the bricks. A cottage and herb garden is also planned for the bakery.

There are many other attractions in the Otways, including the Croft Garden, which features a display of old fashioned and modern roses against a backdrop of mountain views, and the Barham Vale Nursery and Gardens, with its display garden of almost a hectare, including many rare varieties. Fern enthusiasts will want to visit the Ridge Road Fernery, where Peter and Jean Tann have the 22 different fern species of the Otways on display.

At Melba Gully, near Lavers Hill, there are scenic walks and picnic facilities, as well as guided tours to see the local glow worms! For more gourmet delights, the Organic Farm near Forrest, owned by Cornelius and Carrie Bons, has a year-round supply of vegetables, berries in season, and a range of homemade jams, pickles and relishes. The Penny Royal Teahouse and Herb Garden, Division Road, Murroon, would be a perfect spot to stop off for a delightful Devonshire tea, or perhaps a detour to Birregurra to enjoy some of Robyn Barrand's fine regional cuisine, featuring fresh, local ingredients, at Bowden's Point Restaurant, Main Street, Birregurra. Another nursery worth a visit is Otway Herbs Cottage Garden, Biddles Road, Apollo Bay; this is a biodynamic nursery set in the hills of Apollo Bay.

The Otways are well worth a visit, and the stunning surroundings of fern gullies to the Otway tall timber contrasts dramatically with the nearby rugged coastline along the Great Ocean Road.

New Gippsland Seed Farm, PO Box 1 Silvan, 3795, has an extensive range of brambles and berries for the home gardener as well as a comprehensive range of vegetable and ornamental seed.

Barongavale Winery (052) 33.8324

Old Beechy Bakery (052) 35.8281.

Ridge Road Fernery (052) 35.9383.

Barham Valley Nursery and Gardens (052) 37.6871.

The Croft Garden (052) 33.8253.

Organic Farm (052) 36.6296.

Penny Royal Teahouse & Herb Garden (052) 36 3238.

Bowden's Point Restaurant (052) 36.2287.

Otway Herbs Cottage Garden (052) 37.6318.

It is advisable to ring and check opening times and days before visiting. Maps and guide brochures are available at the Tourist Information Centre at Colac.



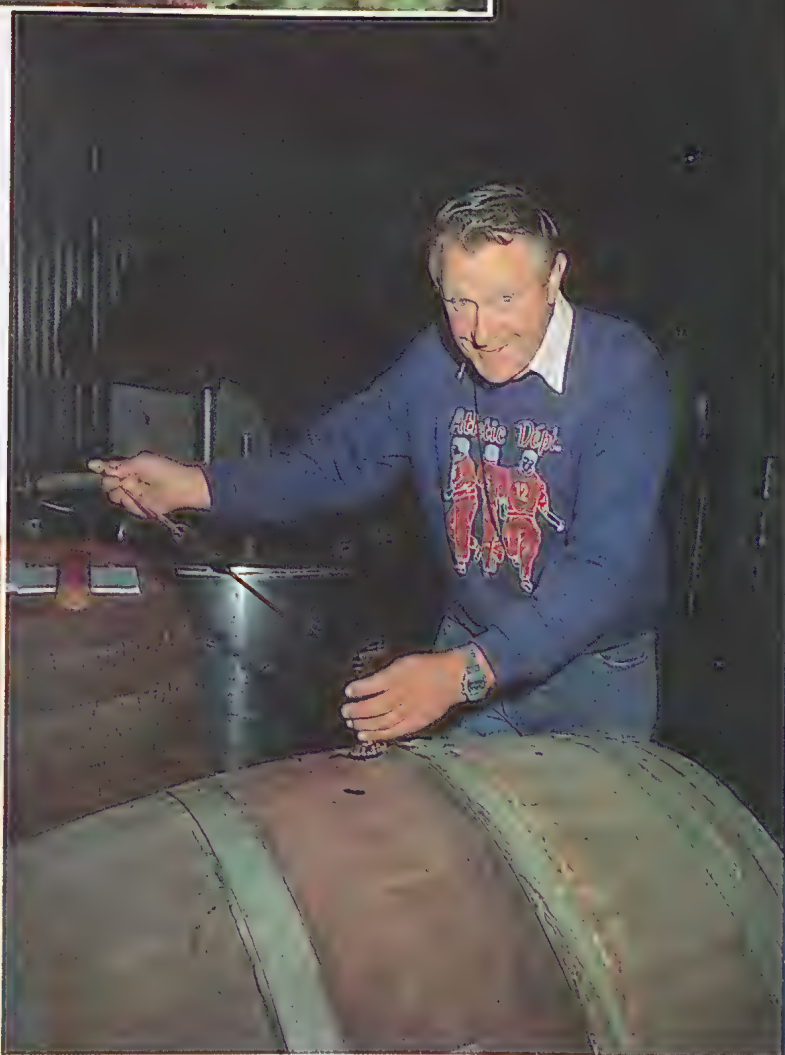




*(above) Marionberries*

*(right) Stuart Walker in the Barongavale Winery*

*(below) Old Beechy Bakery, the wood fire oven  
photos by Gail Thomas*





# HOME HYDROPONICS

*by Alan C. Hughes*

I first discovered hydroponics as a far-fetched idea in science fiction magazines. Gradually the concept began to appear in science magazines and on TV documentary programmes, as what seemed to be a complicated and unrealistic method of growing plants without soil. I dismissed it as gimmicky and gave it no further thought, until I accepted a friend's invitation to visit his caravan and his "garden". My wife Mary and I went that weekend and were fascinated by the healthy crop of vegetables growing in trays of what looked like the contents of a bean bag. Mary was entranced, and from that moment on we were bound for a future in hydroponics.

I must, at this stage, point out that from now on you should read "we" as "Mary", as my own contribution to the project has been little more than carrying anything heavy and offering unsolicited, and usually wrong, advice.

Our friend suggested that we visit a specialist hydroponics shop in Adelaide. Here we inspected their hot-houses where a host of different types of flowers and vegetables were on display. After a long chat with the very friendly and informative proprietor, we purchased a starter kit. This consisted of two polystyrene trays fitted with taps, small bags of coarse and fine gravel, two fluid level indicators and a large bag of perlite, the bean bag-like pellets that substitute for the soil. Last, and most important, were the two bags of nutrient. These, we were exhorted, must be mixed accurately, the two dry powders must never touch and they must never, never come into contact with metal. To this day we don't know what might happen if they do; whether the metal instantly turns to molten slag, or even dissolves completely, as we have been too nervous to allow any contact.

The first job was to paint the trays with a water-based paint, to prevent leakage through the polystyrene foam. When the paint was dry the coarse gravel was heaped over the tap entrance, then the finer gravel on top. This formed a filter to prevent the beads from entering and jamming the tap. Then the perlite was added, the fluid level indicator inserted, and we were ready to add the nutrient. This was carefully mixed and poured into the tray; and at last we were ready to begin planting.

For our first attempt we planted the seeds of carrots and turnips, as well as onion, silver beet and cauliflower

seedlings. Within a few days the seeds were sprouting and the seedlings were burgeoning. At this stage we were keen to expand our operations, but thought that the cost of the trays, etc was too prohibitive. Fortune, however, smiled on us one day during a trip to the local dump. Someone had discarded a pile of foam boxes about the size of apple crates. They had been, as the printing on one side revealed, used to carry iced broccoli. We snapped these up and returned home laden with more than we had taken. Rather than incur further expense for taps and level indicators we decided to improvise. For taps, we drilled a hole in the bottom edge of the box and inserted a length of 10mm plastic tubing. This was fixed into place using waterproof glue. The outer end was hooked to the top of the box and could be lowered when draining was required. The level indicators were constructed from 20mm plastic pipe. One end was covered with nylon insect screen wire, attached with electricians tape. In the pipe we inserted a cork, into which a length of wheat straw had been stuck to act as a marker. A piece of plastic ice cream container, cut with a hole-saw, was jammed in the other end, the straw poking out through the centre hole and cut fractionally above. When lowered into the liquid the cork rose, lifting the straw out of the hole the corresponding distance to indicate the fluid level.

By the time the new boxes were filled and planted it was nearly midsummer. The boxes now required flushing every two weeks to rid them of a build-up of salts. This was done by opening the taps and running a hose over the plants until all the old nutrient had been removed. The water was then allowed to drain away, and the boxes refilled with new nutrient. Our original supply of nutrient was soon exhausted, so again to save expense we purchased the two powders in bulk, about 10 kg of each. We also acquired a 200 litre plastic drum which saved the many mixes in our 10 litre watering can. We now felt we were properly set up, and sat back to await the results.

To our dismay, the once lush and healthy plants began to show signs of distress. Assessing the cause to be the hot sun, we shuffled the trays around the yard looking for the best position, but still they deteriorated. Some died completely, others struggled on through the summer to result in under developed and inedible vegetables. Disheartened, we packed the equipment away and for a while forgot about hydroponics.



Some months later we moved house, and while unpacking the trays, decided to give them another try. Taking the utmost care to get everything right, we planted carrots, silver beet, cabbages and onions. For a while the seedlings flourished, and in the meantime we again moved house. Gradually the plants again began to go downhill; this time we thought it might have been the moving that had disturbed them. Nothing, however, seemed to make them improve.

Quite by chance one day, when mixing up a new batch of nutrient, we noticed a mysterious sediment in the bottom of our 200 litre barrel. After some investigation we found that one part of the nutrient was not dissolving completely. We returned the batch to the shop, where it was discovered to be faulty and promptly replaced.


The plants showed an immediate response to the new nutrient and began to improve. Unfortunately, many of them had not had a good enough start to recover properly and were humanely despatched. New seedlings, however, thrived on the correct food, and soon the trays were masses of greenery.

As the winter rains set in another problem presented itself. The trays filled with rain water, diluting the nutrient and necessitating constant draining. We eventually solved this problem with a hothouse, or "igloo". For around \$650 we purchased an easily erected hothouse, about 3 metres long by 2.6 metres wide, and including access door and window. Into this we managed to cram all our trays and boxes, where they continue to flourish. There was even room left for

*Some of the trays in the igloo. The tray bottom left is constructed from a plastic 20 litre container cut in half.*



my home brew, which loved the constant warm temperature.

We still have a long way to go. Our next project is to fix an automatic waterer, using the ballcock from an old toilet cistern, to the 200 litre drum to save the carrying of nutrient to the trays. We have been asked many times why we bother; why not just grow plants in the ground "normally"? But for Mary, who suffers with back problems, the advantage of having her garden waist high far outweighs the setbacks and difficulties we had getting started. We still have our normal garden, but at the same time we enjoy the novelty and convenience of growing plants by hydroponics. 

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# ARTISTS IN THE GARDEN



## 5 — Jane Nash

### Qualifications

- 1970 Photography, Sculpture, Design and Painting — Seaforth Technical College
- 1971 Graphic Design — Randwick Technical College
- 1972-73 Painting — East Sydney Technical College
- 1975 School photographer for Hanimex — Fotex
- 1977-82 Picture Framing, Sydney  
Pioneering Dry Mount Techniques (Argyle House)
- 1983 Own studio at Dorrigo, New South Wales. Has since painted, carved in wood and, for the past seven years, specialised in ceramics



### Exhibitions

- 1989 The Stables, Armidale
- 1990 Studio Altenberg, Braidwood
- 1991 Wycombe Gallery, Neutral Bay

### Personal Statement

I started doing ceramics as an offshoot to painting, when my sons were born.

What I think makes my pieces unique is that each is hand drawn from life. My cicadas, frogs and beetles are all hand carved as well — usually placed on a jug handle, etc. However, my basic shapes are mould cast.

I love using cool and warm colours under transparent glazes. I specialise in green, blue and white glazes.

Our kiwi fruit farm and studio are situated in Dorrigo, where we are surrounded by rainforest. Just about every marsupial, insect, frog, snake and bird live here.

I believe in moving on, so when ceramics are no longer a challenge I will return to painting or sculpture.





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Nylex Gardena new spring releases include an electronic water controller, a hose trolley, an umbrella bubbler, a hand lawn mower and a flower gatherer.

### THE NEW NYLEX DC-62 WATER CONTROLLER

extends the range of options in automatic watering systems for the home gardener. It features two separate programs with two different start-up times for each of the six valve outlets, so once programmed can provide year-round watering of plants. It runs on a low 24 volts, making it absolutely safe. A battery back-up is included, and a rain switch to override the program when weather makes this necessary. Retail price approximately \$150.00.

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*Nylex Gardena products are available from leading hardware stores, chain stores and garden centres.*





## GARDEN MARKET PLACE



### GARDEN MARKET PLACE

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**FOCUS ON HERBS;** international magazine for the dissemination of herbal knowledge. Regular articles on Australian, Asian, American and European herbs, medical herbalism, research into economic and medicinal herbs, craft, cookery, folklore, herbal happenings plus specialist articles on a range of herbal topics. Published quarterly. Cost \$16 pa from "Focus on Herbs", PO Box 203, Launceston, Tas. 7250. Sample copy \$4. Back issues available.

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### SOCIETIES, ETC

**FRIENDS OF THE ELMS,** c/- National Herbarium, Birdwood Ave, South Yarra, is a Melbourne-based group of people who want to safeguard Australia's elm trees against pests and disease. Membership \$15 single, \$20 family. Offers newsletters, meetings, active involvement and opportunities to help fund research.



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS, Home & Overseas

### OCTOBER

**28th Sept — 7th Oct:** Tulip Time Festival, Bowral, NSW. Enquiries Southern Highlands Tourism Agency (048)85.1130 or Mittagong Visitors Centre (048)71.2888.

**30th Sept — 5th Oct:** "Art in Horticulture" exhibition at VCAH Burnley, Burnley Gardens, Richmond, Vic. Enquiries to (03) 810.8800.

**3rd — 7th Oct:** Wollongong Floral Festival, centred on Wollongong Botanic Gardens. Details from Mr Steve Popple (042) 27. 7468.

**12th Oct:** Australian Geranium Society Annual Spring Show, St Andrew's Church of England Hall, Hill St, Roseville, NSW, 11am to 5 pm.

**12th — 20th Oct:** Leura Gardens Spring Festival; nine gardens open for inspection.

**13th Oct:** Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens Special Spring Festival. Enquiries Anne Joyce (06) 250.9538.

**13th — 19th Oct:** Garden Club of Australia Biennial Convention, Corowa Golf Club, Corowa, NSW. Details from the Convention Co-ordinator, PO Box 1, Wahgunyah, Vic. 3687; tel (060) 33.1419.

**16th — 19th Oct:** Bromeliad Society of NSW Annual Spring Show, at Eastgardens Westfield Shoppingtown, Bunnerong Rd, (cnr Wentworth Ave), Pagewood. Details from the Secretary, Mrs Alice Williams, (02) 971.6183.

**19th Oct:** Geranium and Pelargonium Society of Sydney Annual Show, Burwood Church of Christ Hall, 18 Clarence St, Burwood.

**19th — 20th Oct:** Country Garden Tour, Coolah, NSW, in aid of the Building Fund, Coolah Hostel for the Aged. Enquiries Ruth Arnott, Birnam Wood, Coolah, 2843, or Jennie Stephens, The Rock, Coolah.

**20th Oct:** "Gardens with a View", presented by Birregurra School, Vic. 3242. Four gardens open for inspection. Tel (052) 36.2222.

**26th -27th Oct:** Gardenesque, a major historic gardening sale and exhibition, Vacluse House, Sydney. Enquiries Historic Houses Trust of NSW, (02) 692.8366.

**27th Oct:** Ornamental Plants Collections Association. A Garden Party Luncheon at "Southdown", Merricks, Vic. Details from Margaret Sandiford, OPCA Subscribers Group, (03) 787.4219 a/h.

### NOVEMBER

**Early to mid Nov:** Herb/unusual salads (growing and cooking) classes at Bundanoon Village Nursery, Bundanoon, NSW. Tel (048) 83.6303.

**2nd — 3rd Nov:** Garden Design Seminar and Garden Tour, Bathurst, NSW. Enquiries (063) 37.6581.

**2nd — 3rd Nov:** Heritage Rose Exhibition at Elizabeth Farm, 70 Alice St, Parramatta, 10 am to 4.30 pm.

**2nd — 3rd Nov:** Herb Happening; Pennyroyal Herb Farm, Penny's Lane, Branyan, Bundaberg. Two days of free talks, lectures, demonstrations, etc. Enquiries (07) 55.1622.

**8th — 17th Nov:** Beechworth Garden Heritage Society; nine days of open gardens, lectures, workshops, theme dinners and art exhibitions.

**9th Nov:** Heritage Garden Day, Southern Highlands of NSW; sponsored by Australian Garden Journal to focus on the current Heritage Study in the Shire of Wingecarribee. Details from (048)61.4999.

**9th Nov:** Bundaberg Daylily Show, CWA Hall, 12 noon to 4.30 pm.

**12th — 14th Nov:** 40th Australian National Field Days, Boreonoreu, near Orange, incorporating a special horticultural area. Enquiries to Secretary ANFD, PO Box 2150, Orange, NSW 2800.

**13th — 15th Nov:** Gardentours Special 3-day Garden Tour in and around Bowral area. Details from (048)61.4999. Early booking advisable.

**15th — 17th Nov:** Open weekend, specialising in David Austin roses, at the Perfumed Garden, Derrill Rd, Moorooduc, 3933; Melways ref: 146.K3.

**16th Nov:** Brisbane Daylily Show, Cooparoo High School Hall, 12 noon to 4.30 pm.

**16th — 17th Nov:** How Does Your Garden Grow, a workshop on the history and restoration of 19th and early 20th century gardens, Vacluse House, Sydney. Enquiries Historic Houses Trust of NSW, (02)692.8366.

**16th — 17th Nov:** Geelong Garden and Outdoor Living Expo, Eastern Park, Geelong, 9.00 am to 6.00 pm daily. Promoted by the Rotary Club of Geelong West, funds raised are used for charitable purposes within the Geelong Region. Enquiries S. Yewdall (052)22.3477.

**22nd — 23rd Nov:** Heritage Roses Australia National Conference, Castlemaine, Vic. Details Lee Wooster (054)73.4332.

**30th Nov:** Toowoomba Daylily Show, St Anthony's Hall, Stephens St, 12 noon to 4.30 pm.

*News items for inclusion in "Calendar of Events; Home and Overseas" must reach our editorial office by letter or fax no less than seven weeks before the first day of the month of issue.*



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# Garden Journal

Vol. 11 No. 2  
DECEMBER/FEBRUARY 1992

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THE CAPE**

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**ANN FOGARTY**

**National Advertising Director**

**KEVA NORTH**

**Advertising, New South Wales  
and ACT**

**Bob Hill,**  
73 Clanville Rd, Roseville, NSW 2069  
tel (02) 416.4245; fax (02) 416.5064

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**Lesley de Meyrick,**  
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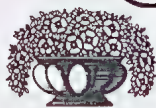
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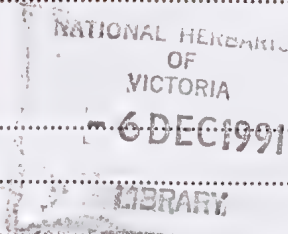
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Front cover: *Babiana rubrocyanea*; (see article on page 73); photo by Bruce J. Knight



## In Our Next Issue —

- Nancy Beckham looks at some alternatives to the energy intensive, labour intensive, water intensive, turf lawn;
  - Tom Crossen takes us to Kirstenbosch Botanic Gardens in Cape Town, and Bruce Knight to Ross River Homestead, 80 km north-east of Alice Springs;
  - Pamela Polglase describes a bushland sanctuary on the way to Palm Beach, north of Sydney, and Carol McCormack invites us to Myall Park, at Glenmorgan in Queensland, the 90 hectare native garden created by David Gordon, whose name will always be remembered for the many fine Grevillea hybrids he raised, especially the three he named after his daughters Robyn, Sandra and Merinda;
  - Gail Thomas visits a country cottage near Colac, in Victoria's Western District, that is now a reception centre for quality functions, a venue for Sunday lunch and an occasional cookery school;
  - Grant Davies writes about the genus *Tulipa*; and we continue our two series on "Artists in the Garden" and interviews with lady gardeners;
  - plus the usual book reviews, Garden Cuttings, etc
- all in the March/April issue of

*THE AUSTRALIAN  
GARDEN JOURNAL*

on sale approximately 25th  
February 1991

# On Divers Mischievous Insects

"I have reserved until now the observations to be made relative to divers mischievous insects which do injury to the herbaceous plants of the kitchen garden."

(William Cobbett — *"The English Gardener"*, first published in 1829)

Cobbett had a few tricks up his sleeve, like fumigating trees with strong tobacco smoke to get rid of the peach bug, and sprinkling "hot lime" on the haunts of slugs and snails. But when it came to caterpillars he had to put his faith in the sparrows arriving in time to eat them.

Shirley Hibberd, one of the gardening gurus of the mid 19th century, believed that "pure soft water is the most potent of insecticides", hot water being far more efficacious than cold. As a second line of defence he too favoured tobacco, while a suggested trap for snails and woodlice was nice young cabbage leaves smeared with rank butter.

An older generation of gardeners will remember, and may even still practise, tricks like planting lettuces around plants with special appeal to snails, like dahlias; the snails filled themselves with lettuce, so the other plants went unscathed. Or of putting upturned terracotta flower pots on the top of stakes to trap earwigs. I well remember, every autumn, grease-banding a whole orchard of apple trees — the recommended mixture was one of cart grease and tar: ascending larvae and other creatures became trapped in the grease and so never reached the fruit. It must have worked, as I also remember harvesting huge quantities of perfect apples.

The first gardening book I ever bought was called "Everyday Gardening", written by J. Coult, and first published in 1931 (mine was the 1945 edition, in case anyone should think I am that old!). Mr Coult's answer to the aphid problem was a solution of soft soap and quassia chips, while for thrips he advocated "a plentiful application of salt water, tobacco water or strong soapy water".

Admittedly we did, at that time, have a few poisons in the potting shed cupboard, like arsenate of lead, but these were last resorts, or else used by commercial growers or those who specialised in raising show-quality blooms.

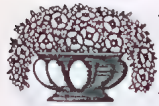
All these simple remedies were dumped and forgotten when the Chemical Age came, with the promise of instant death to anything with six or more legs.

Now the Chemical Age is almost over; not just because of the ecological havoc some of these poisons, we discovered much later, caused, but also because they didn't work all that well. The insects got wise to them and developed their own defenses.

But we are now in the Convenience Age; we insist on instant, ready-made, cures — even dinners — in a bottle, tin or carton. Only the most dedicated gardener to-day would bother with infusions of quassia chips or hellebore root, while the idea of traps of rank butter or sheep's trotters (another old remedy) definitely lacks popular appeal. And tobacco smoke, even in the orchard, is a no-no.

*continued on page 61*





## PROFILES



LORRIE LAWRENCE is a Melbourne garden consultant, designer and landscaper. Her particular concern is to design and help create functional and lovely gardens to suit the needs of their owners, the house styles and the greater environment. She likes to draw from a wide range of Australian and exotic plants which qualify on their individual merits of colour, texture, seasonal behaviour and habit.

For six years Lorrie has been a regular garden writer with **Australian Home Beautiful**; she is currently working on a garden making and growing book with Jane Edmanson. She has had a long professional association with Stephanie Alexander as her garden designer, gardener and arranger of restaurant flowers.

This year Lorrie has offered classes in seasonal gardening design and flower arranging.

GAIL THOMAS is a chef who gardens, rather than a gardener who cooks. She has published two books, **A Gourmet Harvest**, which deals with interesting fruits and vegetables which can be grown at home or purchased, and **Australia's Gourmet Resources** which covers the specialty producers in Australia in aquaculture,

game (both furred and feathered) and the range of sheep, goat and cow's milk cheeses.

Gail co-ordinated a part of the kitchen garden at Stephanie's Restaurant when the garden was first established, with the aim of providing the restaurant with a range of salad ingredients not normally available through commercial sources. Stephanie Alexander wrote the forward to **A Gourmet Harvest**, Lorrie Lawrence designed the cover, and the book was launched at Stephanie's.

BRUCE KNIGHT is proprietor of The Botanist Nursery at Green Point, on the New South Wales Central Coast. The nursery operates a mail order bulb and bulb seed service, with the main emphasis on South African species. The "classic" bulbs, like daffodils and bluebells, he says, are a waste of time in his area, suffering from heat exhaustion and flowering poorly if at all. On the other hand the South Africans cater for the warm temperate regions, including the dry inland. Coming from varied habitats they are quite adaptable, so he has customers reporting satisfactory results from sub-tropical Queensland to coastal Tasmania.

### *On Divers Mischievous Insects, continued from page 60*

Fortunately, science has once more come to the rescue. Now we have some basically simple "new" treatments like pheromone traps and the use of natural predators. Perhaps the wheel is beginning to turn, if not full circle, at least part way round, for cures are being found even in the kitchen cupboard. Researchers in the United States have found that a mixture consisting of one cup of vegetable cooking oil with a tablespoon of dishwashing detergent (simple enough for anyone) will quickly deal with aphids, spider mites and a few other mischiefs, even nematodes. Other "new" remedies include a "biosoap" made from extracts of nicotianas now being used against whitefly, while an extract from the leaves and seeds of the East Indian Neem Tree (pre-prepared) has been found to be effective against more than 80 insect pests, furthermore it has a systematic action. Then there are pepper sprays, garlic mixed with liquid soap, even plain hot water! The list goes on. And don't let us forget the old, simple traps — grease bands, upturned flower pots, etc. Companion planting, too, deserves close attention, and we will be looking at that in a later issue.

**TIM NORTH**

### **Advertising Sales Representative for New South Wales and the ACT**

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Mr Bob Hill, of Bob Hill Media Representations, as our Advertising Sales Representative for New South Wales and the ACT.

Bob Hill has thirty years experience in advertising sales, and both he and his wife are keen gardeners. He can be contacted at:

73 Clanville Road,  
Roseville, NSW 2069  
Tel (02)416.4245  
Fax (02)416 5064

#### **Correction**

In the article on the garden at Woodstock, Hobart, in our October/November issue (pages 14-17) credit for the photographs was incorrectly given to Tom Crossen. The photographs were, in fact, taken by Tim Kingston.



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# Flowers For Thought

## — A Garden For All Seasons

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*Lorrie LAWRENCE describes the garden at Stephanie's Restaurant,  
in the Melbourne suburb of Hawthorn East*

**T**he garden at Stephanie's was not always as it is now. To-day the double storey Victorian building, perched high on a hill at the corner of Tooronga Road and Cato Street, is softened by a serene and nostalgic garden. There is always something in flower whatever the time of year, and even in grim June the early flowering apricot, *Prunus mume* 'Alboplana', of palest pink, wafts its amazing perfume across the garden.

When Stephanie and Maurice Alexander moved there in 1980 the garden wasn't up to much, although the gaunt Italianate mansion, Kawarau, had been classified by the National Trust. Rough mown grass surrounded it, and a few uncomplementary shrubs were dotted here and there.

Some large *Pittosporum unbellatum* had survived the neglect, an ancient fan palm, a few tired old hydrangeas, outcrops of *Iris stylosa* and weeds — that was all!

Down the road, named Cato Street after the family who had lived in the mansion for many years, westward and across it to the south, commercial and light industrial establishments have long replaced the vast original garden, which once swept down to the valley. Thus the garden has now a whimsical foreshortened appearance.

To the east across Tooronga Road is Cato Park, a fine native parkland which gives some relief to the harsh realities of the re-development. This was a gift to the public from the Cato family, and part of the original garden.







(opposite page) Stephanie's Restaurant (Kawarau) looking west across the main lawn, with the old pittosporums on the right.

photo Ralda Anson

(above) Lorrie Lawrence in the garden at Stephanie's.

photo Gail Thomas

(right) The south-west corner, showing the basalt rockery with gazanias, erigeron and cerastium binding the soil.

photo Ralda Anson



Plenty of work was necessary to convert the building, most recently owned by Telecom, into an elegant restaurant. The conversion was ably led by architect John Gribble.

But the garden needed attention as well, and when Stephanie asked me if I would help I was keen to start.

One could have opted for a formal garden with clipped hedges and trimmed pathways, but this was not what Stephanie had in mind. Nor would it really have suited the site, serving only to isolate the property from its locality. It was important that the garden should, as far as possible, harmonise with its surroundings.

Some of the factories had made pleasant entrance gardens, and up Cato Street were plantings of *Prunus cerasifera* 'Nigra', Queensland Box and paperbarks, with a run of evergreen alders in the nature strip across the road. In the group of three blossom trees planted near the Stephanie's sign we included *Prunus cerasifera* 'Nigra' and an alder was used on the west lawn as a screen tree.

The garden was to be a gentle place which would include some of the simple, lovely plants which are

Stephanie's favourites; roses of course, lavenders, spring bulbs, lilac, mock orange, abelia and daphne, forget-me-nots and babies' tears, as well as some scented geraniums.

We felt that the fan palm, certainly a survivor from the first garden, should remain; *Cordyline australis* was planted sympathetically in a spot on the other side of the building. Two of the big old pittosporums were left to provide shade from the northern sun. Another one, which was diseased; had to go, but miraculously a Cootamundra wattle seedling from the park appeared nearby, well positioned by nature right on the eastern border. It grew and was allowed to stay.

The grassy spaces were re-contoured to make more accessible slopes for easy maintenance, and a basalt rockery was built on the steepest part, on the south-west boundary. The soil was a clay shale mix, stiff and inhospitable, there was little topsoil in the exposed headland of the south-west. This area lies in a wind tunnel where,

*continued on page 65*



# Heirloom Treasures

*Gardeners are always interested in anything "new and different" to plant, but, as **Gail THOMAS** reports, to be "different" a plant does not have to be "new".*



**T**here is an increasing interest in heirloom varieties of seeds, those non-hybrid varieties which have been treasured and handed down over generations, and which do not appear in seed catalogues. Possibly there are some which may have been considered lost for ever, but this revival of interest is unearthing a diverse range of seeds from sources such as avid collectors or those dedicated gardeners who have consistently planted selected heirloom treasures of their own over the years to ensure the variety does not literally disappear from the face of the earth!

Clive Blazey, of Diggers Seeds at Dromana in Victoria, believes there is more to be gained from looking back rather than forward to the new hybrid strains of seeds. As a reflection of his belief and support for their survival and the preservation of genetic diversity a number of heirloom seeds are now appearing in the pages of the Diggers Seeds catalogue.

Sweet cherry capsicum, Italian pink eggplant, purple podded Dutch pea, or perhaps some of the "un-red" tomato varieties like the yellows, pink or even green streaked ones that come in many

different shapes and sizes, are bound to tempt many home gardeners.

Clive visited the Seed Savers Exchange in the USA, which was founded in 1975 by Kent Whealy. This tiny organization, run by a group of dedicated amateurs, is doing an enormous job, successfully growing and keeping pure the strains of thousands of varieties of fruit and vegetables. Seed Savers has over 3,000 different beans, 1,700 different tomatoes, 350 lettuce and 450 peppers, with a total seed bank of almost 6,000 varieties.



(top) Heirloom tomatoes

photo Diggers Seeds

(left) Media personality Jane Edmanson launches the heirloom vegetable garden at Werribee Park with heirloom tomatoes and rainbow chard. Harvest Picnic Administrator Maria Kucherhan looks on.

photo Gail Thomas

(right) David Cavagnaro collecting pumpkins.

photo Diggers Seeds





So impressed was Clive with the work of this group that he has arranged to bring David Cavagnaro, the Garden Manager of Preservation Garden, to Australia in 1992, to participate in a number of events and share with us his incredible knowledge, which will hopefully encourage gardeners in Australia to preserve their garden heritage by becoming involved with this growing interest in heirloom varieties.


David Cavagnaro has an impressive background. An entomologist, he is also a freelance photographer whose work has been featured in **Life**, **National Geographic**, **National Wildlife**, **Natural History** and several **Time-Life** books, as well as in magazines, calendars, greeting

cards and record covers. He has taught photography in several universities in California, and is also the author of several books. His credits extend further to permanent museum exhibits, and as a cinematographer for wildlife sequences in the movie, "Never Cry Wolf".

As an accomplished organic gardener and horticultural photographer his knowledge is an invaluable part of Seed Savers Exchange.

For those wishing to learn more of the philosophies and work of Seed Savers, David Cavagnaro will be coming to Australia in late February 1992, where he will be participating in Victoria's premier food and beverage event, the Harvest Picnic, at Werribee Park, on 23rd February.

It is anticipated that along with an impressive display of harvested produce on the day, a garden plot, established at Werribee Park in spring, will be producing a range of heirloom vegetable varieties growing "in situ" for all to see.

David will also be participating in an open day at Heronswood on 1st March and at Garden Week at Burnley Gardens between  7th and 14th March.

*Note: Seed Savers Network, started by Michel and Jude Fanton in Nimbin, in northern New South Wales in 1986, was the subject of an article in this journal of February/March 1991. Seed Savers Network's new address is PO Box 975, Byron Bay, NSW 2481.*

## Flowers For Thought — A Garden For All Seasons, continued from page 63

in unsettled weather, the wind rushes relentlessly up Cato Street from the South Eastern Freeway, frisking along the west and north faces of the building. Gazanias and cerastium were used to help bind the soil in the harshest spots, and two crepe myrtles have been planted on the bluff above the rockery.

A deep border was made right around the house, and along the east and west boundaries informal hedges of *Abelia x grandiflorum* are kept rough clipped to about one metre.


There are now about forty roses in the garden at Stephanie's. First to be planted was a line of the French floribunda 'Mic Mac', golden-apricot, free-flowering, fragrant and known for its hardiness. They were planted near the giant arches of the verandah, interspersed with some of Stephanie's favourite bush roses which I transplanted from her previous home in Thornbury — deep red, flesh pink and old gold. Some precious miniature roses from there are at the back, near the herb garden.

Climbing roses, 'Sutter's Gold' and 'Iceberg', and the ramblers 'Albertine' and tiny-flowered 'Red Cascade' lean against and romp up the Ionic columns of the balcony, mingling with summer flowering jasmine near the steps, while dainty 'Cornelia' drapes itself over the balustrade.

Other roses of the front garden are 'Pink Grootendorst', 'Sarah Van Fleet', 'Blossom Time' 'Radox Bouquet', 'Frühlingsmorgen' 'Fritz Nobis', 'Nevada', 'Green Ice', 'Just Joey' and a giant climbing 'Lorraine Lee' with a tumble of 'Bloomfield Courage' down the rockery in November.

'Iceberg' roses now flank the old brick steps, cement rendered to form a handsome entrance. They are always fragrant in the still summer air, and the many torn stems are witness to the attempts of departing escorts to pluck blooms for their partners, with varying success! Garden designer and writer Graeme Purdy suggested this planting to me after dinner one night in 1982. Planted with them the Mexican Orange Blossom, *Choisya ternata*, supplies evergreen foliage in winter and fragrant flowers in autumn and early spring.

Last year two silver pears, *Pyrus salicifolia*, were planted as sentries near the entrance to celebrate the opening of the upstairs dining rooms. Around them are planted white and pale pink lavenders, 'Green Ice' roses and other white flowered plants including babies' tears, cerastium, *Anthemis montana*, and a small white and green variegated grass.

There are many other trees and shrubs in the garden, and small plants. Near the original bluestone steps leading onto the verandah an enormous variegated daphne welcomes guests in winter, and *Clematis montana* 'Rubens' and many old world azaleas in spring. There are roses in summer, shasta daisies, *Solanum ranattonnetii* and plumbago. When autumn comes there are still roses and the gentle flame coloured leaves of *Spiraea* 'Anthony Waterer'. And almost always the luminous lipstick pink bells of *Fuchsia coralle* amongst its coppery leaves  by the front door.



# More on Seed Savers Exchange

**S**eed Savers Exchange (SSE), founded by Kent Whealy in 1975 and with its headquarters at Decorah in Iowa, is the world's largest private organization devoted to seed preservation. Its mission is to stockpile viable old time "heirloom" seeds that could provide a genetic lifeline if the world's hybrid-based food supplies should ever be threatened.

A critical factor in the story of genetic erosion was the discovery, early in this century, of hybrid vigour, a one-generation spurt that follows the cross-breeding of two varieties of the same species. Since then the world has taken off on a "hybrid high". Plant breeders have been hard at work producing "better" hybrid vegetables, fruits and grains, releasing only a few of the thousands of crosses they make. Thus our food crops now have a narrow genetic base and increased vulnerability to pests and diseases, as the following example shows.


Nearly all the hybrid corn planted in the USA in 1970 was genetically similar, and, as it turned out, susceptible to a new disease called southern corn leaf blight. More than half the crop in the southern states was wiped out. However, an old time colonial variety called Virginia Gourdseed was found, that had a built-in resistance to this new disease. What would have been the result if Virginia Gourdseed had been allowed to slip into oblivion?

That "what" spurs Kent Whealy and the members of SSE to keep planting, and so preserving, as many heirloom seeds as they can. They do so by offering one another some 4,000 varieties of vegetables and fruits, more than are offered by all the commercial companies in the USA combined. There are some unusual ones among them, like a 16 feet tall sweetcorn called 'Skyscraper', the football-shaped 'Old Time Tennessee' muskmelon with a musky smell so distinctive that "you can find it in the dark", and a hot pepper with the tell-tale name 'Ring of Fire'.

To keep the stock viable each variety must be planted ("grown out") every three or four years. A very large number are planted on the one and a half acre plot called Preservation Garden, managed by David Cavagnaro.

SSE gets a steady stream of varieties, sent from all over the country, and also buys non-hybrid seed stocks from companies that are going out of business. Other companies that sell out are often taken over by large agrichemical companies like Royal Dutch Shell, now the world's largest seed company. These large

companies drop the regionally adapted collections of non-hybrid vegetables and fruits and substitute hybrids that are more commercially acceptable. Commercial growers want varieties with high yields, good looks, that are easy to pack and transport, of uniform maturity for machine harvesting. These, however, are not necessarily the qualities that are important to the home gardener, who is more interested in flavour than looks, in varieties that crop over a long period rather than all at once.

Of course, not all "heirloom" vegetables are worth eating. One tomato variety is called "Never Will" because it produces fruit that mature but never ripen! Another is described as "the worst variety ever bred" as it is as hard as a rock; but it has been used to contribute firmness to varieties that are over soft. So every variety is important. 

## Some of Diggers Seeds "Heirloom" tomatoes:

These were collected by Seed Savers Exchange ten years ago, and so assured of preservation. Red is not the natural colour of tomatoes, for they occur naturally in many different colours, including purple, yellow, white, pink, green and brown, as well as bicolours in between.

**Long Lost Mixed;** an "un-red" collection that includes Thoson's Seedless Grape, Broad Ripple Yellow Currant, Red Peach, Green Bell Pepper and Schmeig Creg Streaked.

**Colossal Yellow/Orange;** huge fruit with a fine flavour. From Colossal Yellow (flat globe) or Verna Orange (oxheart shape).

**Green Streaked;** named varieties from Green Bell Pepper or Green Zebra. Tops the test for taste over all the reds and other colours, and they keep well.

**Pink Streaked;** a beautiful tomato with orange and yellow speckled apple-sized fruit. Elberta Girl, Schmeig Creg or Dewesse Streaked.

Note: Diggers Seeds is at 105 Latrobe Parade, Dromana, Vic. 3936.



## LETTERS



Dear Tim,

I have only just read your editorial in the June/July Garden Journal.

I visited New Zealand last year and used the book "Gardens to visit in New Zealand". Some were open all the year, like nurseries with attached gardens, botanic gardens and arboreta. Others have specific months when the gardens were at their best and they opened at weekends, other times by appointment. I visited a friend in Palmerston North who is in the book. She loves sharing her garden and will spend an afternoon with just two people or a busload.

The private gardens are not necessarily in the towns so a phone call for an appointment and directions would be essential. I was sold on the idea. It seems you had some privacy as the address is not given, but if you are a keen gardener staying in an area you can plan some pleasant trips.

The Open Garden Scheme in South Australia is, to my mind, fading. People who have opened their gardens no longer do so for a variety of reasons. The garden is expected to be immaculate (mine never is); a wet day and few come; it all seems a waste of time; or a good day and hundreds descend and it is all overpowering. The regulars are becoming a few country gardens, specialist gardens, or gardens attached to nurseries.

By contacting a district co-ordinator in the Heritage Roses you can visit rose enthusiasts in that area. I have had some pleasant and rewarding days with Heritage Rose members, and we love showing our "hill station" garden to small groups and friends.

I have never been in Victoria in an area where a garden was open. You would have to make a special trip and with the distances in Australia this would be a major holiday undertaking. I am all in favour of the New Zealand idea of "by appointment" visiting. Only interested gardeners would make the effort and only the keen would come in bad weather or off season, and they would visualise the true beauty of bare trees and treasures to come.

I gather time, money and enthusiasm are needed to compile a book.

Yours sincerely,  
Mary Grant,  
Adelaide.

Dear Friends,

Just a quick note to congratulate you on the June/July issue. I can almost smell the rose on the cover. The size of the flower astounds me. I tried 'Reine des

Violettes' in England, but could only get tiny flowers from it on the hungry gravel I had in Hertfordshire. My first thought was that the rose was 'Mme Isaac Pereire', that vigorous hybrid perpetual with huge luscious flowers and heady fruit scent. 'Mme Isaac' produced huge flowers like that in Keva's picture, even on my poor soil. Beales, in *Classic Roses*, calls her a Bourbon, but is he right? His accompanying photo offers a travesty of the real rich colour of 'Mme Isaac'.

I was intrigued with Don Evans' reference to a rose called 'Mrs Wakefield Christie-Miller'. The Christie-Miller family have been gardeners for many generations. When I joined the British Iris Society in 1958 or thereabouts, there were three Christie-Millers in the society; Mrs E.H. of Clarendon, near Salisbury, and C.W. and Miss C., both of Swyncombe House at Henley on Thames. I met C.W. once or twice, and talked about a hardy plant of *Iris wattii* that he was enthusiastic about. He was an old man then, and I doubt that he still lives. There may be other members of the family, but I have lost touch now. Still, I'm happy there is a rose with the name.

Yours

George Waters,  
Pacific Horticulture, Berkeley, CA

Dear Tim and Keva,

Many thanks for the copy of *The Australian Garden Journal*, Aug/Sept issue. It made great reading and I could really identify with "The World's Worst Gardener".

Congratulations on your 10 years!

Regards,  
Robyn Williams,  
Northrup King Australia, Dandenong, Vic.

Dear Mr and Mrs North,

In the article on Helen Gordon in your Aug/Sept issue I noted with interest Helen's comments on the many perennials and shrubs suitable for our climate but not yet readily available through Australian nurseries.

Do you, or Mrs Gordon, have any idea where one can obtain the dwarf Honeysuckle, *Lonicera nitida*? There is a description of it in the *Readers' Digest Book of Gardening*, and I also saw a picture of it recently at a talk given by Dr Jim Willis, to whom I have written in the hope that he can throw some light on it. ➡



## LETTERS, continued

On another matter, do you have any idea of a lady called Madame Lemoine? I have recently ordered a crabapple, 'Lemoine', for its stunning pink flowers, only to find that there is a lilac called 'Madame Lemoine', and also a peony 'Marie Lemoine', double white with pinky-red edges.

Best regards,  
Marigold Curtis,  
Cudjee, via Terang, Vic.

### Editor's note:

*Madame Lemoine was the wife of Victor Lemoine, who had a nursery in Nancy, in the French province of Lorraine, in the latter half of the last century. He was a noted hybridiser and worked with many different groups of plants (hence the recurring names 'Mme Lemoine', 'Lemoinei', etc) but lilacs were his speciality. It is said that his wife, who had better eyesight and more nimble fingers, actually did much of the cross pollinating herself, often perched on top of a ladder. Victor died in 1911, and their son, Emile, continued the hybridising work, introducing even more new hybrids than his father before him. A total of 214 plants have been attributed to Lemoine et fils. The nursery finally closed in 1955.*

Dear Mr North,

I found the article entitled "How Plant Aromas Improve Your Health" by Nancy Beckham, in the last issue of the Australian Garden Journal, very interesting and informative. It gave your readers a good introduction to Aromatherapy. The name "Aromatherapy", which implies "Therapy using smells", is actually a mis-translation of the French name; a more correct translation being "The therapy of aromatic oils".

The technique has been used throughout history by virtually all civilisations, and aromatic oils formed the basis of the medicine practised by Hippocrates. Forgotten and ignored for many years while we experimented with synthetic drugs and preparations, it is now practised widely in many countries of our modern world, notably England, France, Switzerland, Norway, and America.

If any of your readers would like more information on this fascinating therapy, or their nearest Aromatherapist specialising in the therapy, would they please write to the Secretary of The International Federation of Aromatherapists, PO Box 24 Kingsgrove, NSW 2208 (tel. (02)502.4910).

All gardeners need relaxation, and I cannot recommend highly enough the use of plant essential oils, except that I would not use oil of pennyroyal (*Mentha pulegium* or *Hedeoma pulegioides*) owing to pulegone, one of its constituents, which can cause abortion. These oils create harmony of mind, body and spirit, whether by massage treatments, baths or inhalation.

The Australian Garden Journal appears to me to have the same capacity to bring harmony of mind, body and spirit to its readers. Thank you,

Yours sincerely,  
Anne Seymour-Apps,  
Chairman, Australian Branch,  
International Society of Aromatherapists.

Dear Tim and Keva,

Congratulations on your anniversary — of ten years from Garden Cuttings to The Australian Garden Journal — from a smallish newsletter to a full colour journal!


The decade has really flown. I remember talking to Keva in the early days, and I felt a loyalty to your cause. I can appreciate how hard you both have worked, and have always seen Garden Journal as an intellectual/aesthetic approach to gardening, and that there was a niche to fill. Your current cover is particularly appealing, with its colour combinations and composition. Hang on in there, groom an assistant editor — and all the best for the future.

Kind regards,  
Ed Wilson,  
Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney.

Museums Unit ACT Government

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# Rosemary

## The Herb of Remembrance

by Michael BAILES



**T**raditionally, Rosemary sprigs were used at both weddings and funerals. Rosemary was seen as the "preserver" and a "strengtheners of the memory". Thus it kept young love fresh and kept alive the memory of departed friends. The poet Herrick said of Rosemary:

*"Grow for two ends, it matters not at all,  
Be't for my bride or for my burial."*

Rosemary was used in religious ceremonies and funerals in place of the more expensive incense. The smoke of the burning Rosemary was thought to be purifying, its aroma preserved the body of the departed and its leaves, green even in winter, symbolised immortality. In Shakespeare's "Hamlet", Gertrude says, while scattering flowers and herbs (most likely Rosemary) on Ophelia's grave:

*"I thought thy bride-bed to have  
decked, sweet  
And not have strew'd thy grave."*

Rosemary's religious associations were further enhanced by Christian legends. The Virgin Mary on her flight into Egypt rested beside a Rosemary bush and threw her robe over it. The flowers of Rosemary charmingly turned from white to blue in her honour.

*"When as on Summer days I see  
That sacred herb, the Rosemary,  
The which, since once our Lady  
threw  
Upon its flowers her robe of blue,  
Has never shown them white again,  
But still in blue doth dress them –  
Then, oh, then  
I think upon old friends and bless  
them."*

Rosemary's traditional associations with clothes is strong. Rosemary

hedges were favourite places to dry the washing. Not only did the washing come out smelling sweet and fresh but the fragrance was said to preserve the clothes by repelling moths. Dried Rosemary and Lavender were both sprinkled among stored linen.

Rosemary tea was used medicinally to improve a fading memory and was thus popular with students before exams! Rosemary and Sage were recommended for the preservation of youth. In Bologna there is an old belief that the flowers of Rosemary, if placed in contact with the skin and especially with the heart, give gaiety and sprightliness. Perhaps another reason for using it at funerals and weddings?

In cooking, Rosemary was always used with meat, not only for flavour but before the days of refrigeration as a preservative.

Rosemary was traditionally used on the Christmas Day Roast Beef and the Wassail Bowl. Along with Bay, Mistletoe and Holly, Rosemary would have been one of the few green herbs available in winter, and would certainly have been the most aromatic and flavoursome.

There is a Christmas card beginning:

*"The boar's head in hand bring I,  
With garlands gay and Rosemary."*

In Roman times garlands of Rosemary were used to crown important guests at feasts. No doubt the Rosemary was thought to preserve the brain against over-indulgence in alcohol!

Rosemary's historically important contribution to the world of perfumery is often overlooked. The very first perfume using alcohol as a solvent was "Hungry Water". This was an infusion of Rosemary and fine spirit alcohol made especially for the Queen of

Hungary. Not only was this first modern style perfume a success, it so preserved the beauty of the Queen that she received a proposal in her eighties! With such good press and Royal endorsement it is little wonder that the perfume industry was set to flourish.

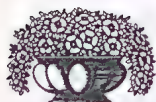
Interestingly, modern research on Rosemary has shown much substance in what at first glance look like folklore. Rosemary has what doctors call a "hyperaemic" effect, that is causing a better local blood circulation. Essential Oil of Rosemary is therefore used (diluted 1:10 in olive oil) as a warming rub to help rheumatic diseases, lumbago, neuritis, sciatica as well as sports injuries such as sprains and bruises. Here might be the reason for its rejuvenating reputation. Rosemary also promotes blood supply to the brain. Too much will, in fact, elevate blood pressure. Perhaps here is the reason for its reputation for helping memory. Modern research has even shown Rosemary can be used as a natural food preservative.

*"As for Rosemary, I let it run all  
over my garden walls, not onlie  
because my bees love it but because  
it is a herb sacred to remembrance  
and to friendship, whence a sprig of  
it hath a dumb language"*

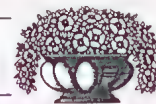
(Sir Thomas More). 

*Note: Michael Bailes is co-proprietor, with his wife, of The Fragrant Garden, at Erina, New South Wales. The Fragrant Garden's "Ease-my-aches" Oil contains a lot of Rosemary Oil.*





## BOOK REVIEWS



### ***The Italian Renaissance Garden***

**by Claudio Lazzaro; published by Yale University Press; recommended retail price \$82.50 reviewed by John Patrick**

In a previous issue of this journal I reviewed three new books about the Italian garden and commented on the popularity of these most delightful gardens.

Now comes this very attractive and well researched book, profusely illustrated with photographs and contemporary illustrations both in colour and black and white. The photographs, specially commissioned for this book, address specific issues discussed in the text and help in a clear appreciation of the points that the author is making. The text is extensively noted, so that while it is easily read, constant reference to the back of the book is cumbersome, especially in so large a work.

Research in the last two years has greatly extended our knowledge of Italian gardens of the Renaissance. Refer to the bibliography of this work if you need proof of this, for the sources are extensively of the past decade.

In many respects this may be seen as an up-date of Georgina Masson's excellent *Italian Gardens*, though in fact the author has selected a more limited palette, at least in time, ignoring both the earliest of Italian gardens and the latest, and focussing on the classic gardens, Medici gardens around Florence and the gardens of Rome, Tivoli and Viterbo. Especially she focuses on the role nature plays within these gardens. Here the old themes that flowed through lectures I received as a student are cast to one side, to be replaced by a recognition of the significance of nature in the formation of these gardens.

The short first chapter deals with this aspect in an excellent manner, describing the relationship of art and nature and the establishment of the "third nature", part art and part nature on a level more sublime than itself.

Though we may not suspect it if one looks at the Italian garden today, critical

to this effect is the combination of planting with the sculptures, masonry, water and grottoes we readily attribute to Italian gardens. The transient nature of plants, especially in their trained form that is typical of the classical Italian garden style, means that they have been largely lost. Claudio Lazzaro consistently refers back to the wonderful paintings of Guisto Utens and to contemporary writings. It soon becomes apparent that the Italian gardener was at least as enthusiastic about introduced plant types as the English gardener 200 years later, though their numbers were fewer. Significantly, these new plants were evidence of one-upmanship among gardeners and garden owners.

Part of the enjoyment of the Italian Renaissance garden is the unravelling of its many metaphors, so that as an intellectual exercise no gardens offer greater challenge than these. Some, especially the beautiful and haunting Bomarzo, place challenges before the scholar which will almost certainly never be fully resolved. Claudio Lazzaro makes a fine effort, drawing on recent research to explain gardens, especially in the major case studies of Castello, Boboli, Villa Lante and Villa d'Este.

It is to be regretted that at least one of the Italian gardens has not retained its original planting layout and form, to allow a different appreciation of design and intent. But this book does permit our imagination to recreate their style and to address the task with some confidence. Expensive it may be but it makes most interesting reading.

### ***Guide des Jardins Botaniques de France***

**published by Pandora Editions, Paris, 1991 reviewed by Brian Morley**

France has a rich and diverse garden and horticultural heritage. The availability of up-to-date information on French gardens published in English has increased in recent years, so that non-French speaking garden enthusiasts can be thankful.

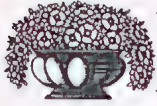
*Private Gardens of France* (1983), by Anita Pereire and Gabriella van Zuylen, published by Weidenfeld and Nicholson, is a sumptuously illustrated selection of well known (Vaux-le-Vicomte, Giverny and the Chateau de Villandry) and less well known gardens (Manoir de Criqueboeuf and Le Vasterival, both created in the 1950s). But the book is a treasure one could not, and would not wish to, fit in the glove-box of a holiday hire car.

Touring guides to French gardens are what is wanted and they now exist although they were written in French. The older "Guide des Parcs et Jardins de France" (1979) by Corinne Peterson, Francoise Pochon and Nicholas Le Barazer, published by Editions Princesse, Paris, is a 169 page paperback which includes 227 gardens, parks or arboreta. The gardens are each grouped in one of 10 regions, each illustrated by a simple map locating particular gardens. As examples, Giverny is described in three sentences, Vaux-le-Vicomte in three paragraphs. Brief details give opening times, the address and telephone number. There are monochrome or coloured illustrations on most pages, but the brevity of the garden descriptions, typographical inconsistencies and lack of discipline in use of typeface and balancing text and illustrations make the book useful, but ordinary.

Now, this book by Pandora Editions is clear, accessible even for non-French speakers, and essential reading. Produced in a slim, touring guide format, with maps, historical and scientific synopses for each garden, good colour illustrations, a glossary and indices to plants and gardens, the 324 pages refer to more than 150 gardens and arboreta in France and its colonies in Martinique, Guadeloupe, Reunion and Tahiti. Each entry is preceded with the address, climatic conditions, soil type, area of garden, management authority and name of person in charge with a telephone number.

The gardens are listed in regional groups, suitable for visiting by car; the Paris region, south of Fontainebleau, near Bourges, Lorraine, Alsace, near Dijon,





## BOOK REVIEWS



Lyonnaise, the Alps, near Marseilles, the Cote d'Azur, near Montpellier, the Pyrenees, the Garonne Valley, near Poitou, near Limoges, the Loire Valley, Brittany, Normandy, the Cherbourg Peninsula, and northern France. Clearly and stylishly printed and stoutly bound in an attractive all-weather soft touch plastic jacket, this is a well designed functional product.

Let us hope that Pandora's box of goodies now extends to a companion edition to French parks and gardens. The guide to French botanic gardens and arboreta is available from the North Lodge Shop, Adelaide Botanic Garden, for \$28.00.

### ***Hardy Herbaceous Perennials***

**by Leo Jelitto and Wilhelm Schacht; published by Timber Press, distributed in Australia by Batsford; recommended retail price \$200.00**

**reviewed by Trevor Nottle**

Recently I heard the rather surprising claim made by a national gardening identity that perennials were old-fashioned and as dated as cottage gardens and the English garden style. The New American garden, whatever that may turn out to be at the hands of local interpreters, will, it seems, be the next gardening trend.

With that odd news in mind I came to review this book. It was reassuring to find that at least within its scope, if not in the mind of my noted informant, there is plenty of room for the uses of perennials to be creatively explored well beyond that offered by cottage gardens and the English style. In their survey of perennials Jelitto and Schacht take a very broad view of what these plants may be taking into their compass — bulbs, evergreen and deciduous herbaceous plants, rhizomatous and cormaceous plants, ferns, aquatics, grasses, succulents and cacti, soft wooded shrubs and parasites. Inquisitive nursery folk and adventurous gardeners will find a treasure trove of new plants here, plants which include those new to cultivation

and those coyly described as having "botanical interest", as well as the old familiar favourites. From Abronia (Sand Verbena) to Zizania (Wild Rice) and over 800 genera in between more than 7,000 cultivars are described.

Precocious acolytes of the new American Garden will find the material of their schemes here aplenty — rudbeckias, sedums, coreopsis, echinacea and grasses galore. Others, perhaps persuaded more by their local environment than the dictates of fashion, will find a valued reference for a wide range of plants to suit a range of climates. The greatest emphasis may lie on plants suited to cool temperate zones but there are many which will be found reliable and adaptable outside those limits.

Each entry includes notes on cultivation, propagation and the garden uses of the plant concerned. Dedicated gardeners will find this a comprehensive, informative and stimulating source book for perennial plants that have the potential to further their creative endeavours.

### ***Doongalla Restored***

**by Jean Galbraith; published by Mulini Press, Canberra; recommended retail price \$19.95**

**reviewed by Tim North**

Jean Galbraith is one of our most endearing and enduring writers about gardens and plants; enduring in the sense that her books, I have not the slightest doubt, will be read and re-read, loved and loved again, by many generations of Australian gardeners and naturalists.

This fictionalised story of the restoration of a garden was first published in the Australian Garden Lover between 1939 and 1941, and we should be grateful to Mulini Press for its initiative in republishing it in book form.

The story is a simple one and totally unaffected; a young couple discover a little cottage with a derelict, overgrown garden, and decide to make it their country retreat from an otherwise suburban existence in Melbourne. The book describes only their first short stay at Doongalla; how they started to clear the scrub, make steps and

discoveries, and, towards the end of the stay, how they found a young Scotsman who would tend the property while they were not there, for three pounds a week and his keep!

The endearing quality about Jean Galbraith's writing is what may almost be described as its naivete; hers is a world stripped of all superficialities and artificialities, a world of simple, good folk who have simple pleasures and who believe in the virtue of honest toil. But it is a naivete tempered by an enquiring mind and an observant eye, for Jean is a born naturalist; she observes how every petal unfurls, every shoot that emerges from the soil, every creature that moves in her garden. And through her so do Christine and John, the fictitious couple who came to love Doongalla. The cynic may say that it is all just too good, that life is not like this. Of course, it isn't but life would be a great deal poorer without people like Jean Galbraith.

### ***Wattle***

**by Maria Hitchcock; published by Australian Government Publishing Service, 1991; recommended retail price \$29.95**

**reviewed by Tim North**

Maria Hitchcock fought a lone, long battle to have Wattle Day proclaimed as a day of national celebration, on 1st September each year. The battle was won, after years of frustrating "knock-backs" from politicians and bureaucrats, when the Golden Wattle, *Acacia pycnantha*, was officially proclaimed Australia's National Floral Emblem on 1st September 1988. This book is a record of Maria's campaign and the research she carried out on the history of the Wattle Day movement. It includes poetry, stories and plays, songs and music about wattle, as well as more practical information about growing the Golden Wattle, the planning, design and maintenance of wattle groves and nature areas, as well as regional lists of *Acacia* species. It is a remarkable achievement and a noteworthy addition to our country's history.





## BOOK REVIEWS



### ***Your Garden Questions Answered***

**by Rosemary Davies; published by Hyland House, 1991; recommended retail price \$19.95 reviewed by Tim North**

The author's first book, "The Creative Gardener's Companion", published in 1987, is still one of the best "how-to-do-it-all" books for Australian gardeners. This is a more modest, softcover, publication, covering most of the same ground but in a different format. The first part is in the form of questions and answers, based on her 14 years of answering queries on radio, by telephone and mail; the second part consists of plant lists for different situations and uses, and seasonal "check lists" of jobs to be done.

Rosemary Davies is one of a younger generation of garden writers, and it is refreshing to know that we do have young people who are so knowledgeable and such good communicators (not to mention good looking!).

### ***Traditional Gardens in Australia***

**by Peter Cuffley; published by Five Mile Press, 1991; recommended retail price \$35.00 reviewed by Tim North**

Peter Cuffley's "Creating Your Own Period Garden", published in 1984, was a modest, almost economy, paperback publication with very few colour pictures. This new book is substantially an updated and vastly improved version of the same work. It comes in hard cover landscape format — a size which personally I find inconvenient, as it won't fit into my bookshelves, but that is a minor quibble. It is a handsome publication with excellent colour plates, black and white photos of infinitely superior quality to the earlier book and far more of them, a more stylish layout and better quality paper. The plant lists have been considerably expanded — there is, for example, a whole section on ornamental grasses — and brief descriptions of individual plants are given, a notable omission in the earlier book.

There have been minor changes to the text, and the final chapter, "Looking Ahead" has been completely re-written.

All this makes this book invaluable to those who have an old garden in need of restoration, or who yearn for a "period" garden, whether it be Victorian, Gardenesque, or "cottage".

### ***Paradeisos; the Art of the Garden***

**by Germaine Bazin; published by Cassell Publishers Ltd; recommended retail price \$75.00 reviewed by John Patrick**

When my wife and I married part of the joy was extending our libraries, and fortunately they complemented each other very well. Among the largest books she possessed was Germaine Bazin's *The History of World Sculpture*, a handsome book with excellent illustrations. This type of production seems to be his metier, for now we have another beautifully produced book with its focus the art and history of gardens.

Germaine Bazin is clearly well qualified to write about art history, for he has an international reputation, having been Chief Curator of the Department of Paintings at the Louvre, professor of art history at the Ecole du Louvre and the University of Brussels, and research professor at the Faculty of Fine Arts, York University, Toronto.

There have been a significant number of books about the history of gardens in the past decade so that there is a need for the enthusiast to select the best available. Equally there are only limited illustrations and these tend to be used repetitively, so that books, even though they have different texts, often have a familiar look. It should be said that this work contains some excellent illustrative material, including both contemporary photographs and historical material. This is especially so with the gardens of Italy and France, which receive good coverage.

Yet for all this I find it hard totally to commend this book. Many passages make very heavy going indeed, and yet the overall effect is one of providing a very

general account of the subject, perhaps without suitably significant depth. There are, however, several excellent features for the author has a fine grasp of European history and art, in particular, so that the inter-relationships of distinct European styles and the effects of historical events is well handled. I find this to be one of the most difficult aspects of garden history to teach Australian students, because of their failure to grasp the way in which garden design frequently responds to subtle but significant changes in history and reflects those changes.

Perhaps Derek Clifford's *History of Garden Design* or the more recent *History of Gardens* by Christopher Thacker might attract my attention in preference to this work for a readable text, though the quality of presentation and illustration here is to be preferred.

### **BOOKS RECEIVED**

**A Guide to Melbourne's Parks and Gardens. by Rhonda Boyle; foreword by Sir Rupert Hamer; Cicada Bay, Melbourne, 1991; \$16.95**

**Growing Vegetables, by John Mason and Rosemary Lawrence; Kangaroo Press, Sydney, 1991.**

**The Home Vegetable Garden (8th edition); NSW Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, 1991; \$15.50 plus \$1.00 postage from most NSW Agriculture offices.**

**Gifts from the Garden, by Caroline Gunter; Kangaroo Press, Sydney, 1991; \$19.95.**

**Pruning Ornamental Shrubs and Trees, by L.F. Eager; Hyland House, Melbourne, 1991; \$14.95.**

**Garden Weeds; their identification and control, by D.J. Whibley and T.J. Christensen; Botanic Gardens of Adelaide. Available from North Lodge Shop, price \$10.00 plus \$2.50 p/p.**



# Cape Bulbs, 1850

**Bruce J. KNIGHT**, proprietor of The Botanist Nursery at Green Point, near Gosford, writes about some South African bulbs known to have been in cultivation in and around Sydney in 1850.

Generally speaking bulbs are obliging plants, most of them growing readily from seed and travelling well in their dormant state. As a consequence very early in the piece they found their way via the packs and cargoes of explorers and traders to gardens throughout the world. During the 19th century many South African species were introduced to Australia, where they found the climate much to their liking.

Descendants of some of these are popular garden plants to-day, others survive only in a few old gardens or cemeteries, while many fell victim to time, war and changing fashion and are only now becoming available once more.

Listed here is a selection of species established in the Sydney area by 1850, as documented in the catalogues of the Macarthur Estates and Shepherd's Darling Nursery, held in the Mitchell Library.

## *Agapanthus africanus* (*A. umbellatus*)

This small evergreen species with somewhat leathery foliage and rich mid-blue flowers on 30 to 60 cm stems is not now common in cultivation. Both names were probably used for what are nowadays considered several distinct species, and are now applied erroneously to forms of *A. praecox*. *A. africanus* is a good border plant and does well in large containers also. The variegated form is most attractive but very slow growing.

## *Amaryllis belladonna*

Late summer sees the richly perfumed pink trumpets of Belladonna, the Naked Lady, borne on 60 cm stems above the large leafless bulbs. A number of forms, including a pure white, occur naturally and

have become more diversified in cultivation so that every district seems to have its own variant. The very robust forms with 90 cm stems, up to 25 blooms per scape and a pronounced neck to the bulb are probably *Amarygia*, hybrids with *Brunsvigia*. Bulbs are planted with the neck just below or a little above soil level in at least part sun and prefer dryish conditions during dormancy.

## *Babiana rubrocyanea*

The Winecup Babiana is a striking plant and easily grown. The cup-shaped blooms are royal blue with a large clearly defined crimson centre. It grows 15 to 20 cm, flowers late winter or early spring and prefers a light soil in full sun. Other babianas which have long been cultivated in Australia are *B. stricta* in white, yellow, blue and purple; *B. disticha* in blue/white combinations; *B. nana* with large open flowers in delicate blue shades; *B. villosa* whose crimson flowers have contrasting fat black anthers. The blue and purple babianas most commonly encountered are usually hybrids and it is well worth the effort to track down species for a diversity of colour, form and fragrance.

## *Crinum bulbispermum*

Large white, pink or red trumpet flowers with a broad red stripe down each petal. The scape rises to 60 cm, holding the flowers above a fountain of luxuriant foliage in spring. Prefers good moist soil and part to full sun, growing well along the dripline of trees. Adds an exotic effect to any garden but is at its best mass planted in large gardens or parks. The more commonly grown *C. moorei* was not introduced to England until 1874 and presumably to Australia about the same time.





(above) *Ixia maculata*  
(right) *Watsonia coccinea*

### **Gladiolus**

Species *Gladiolus*, of which there are over 180, are currently much in demand, expensive and hard to obtain. They are generally slenderer and more delicate in appearance than the common garden hybrids, flowers are often quite different in shape and most of those obtainable are winter growers. They prefer a sandy, well drained soil in full sun (there are exceptions) and it is probably best to grow them in pots until you have sufficient stock to see whether or not they like your garden. *G. carneus* has white or pink flowers with crimson spear marks on the lower petals and has given rise to a number of hybrids which are generally larger than the species' 30 to 45 cm. *G. orchidiflorus* has unusual jade toned flowers on stems to 30 cm; *G. tenellus* has wiry leaves and masses of perfumed yellow flowers that may be tipped pink or mauve; *G. tristis* despite its pale coloured flowers has always been popular for its sweet evening fragrance.

### **Ixia**

By 1850 there were already a number of hybrids and cultivars available. The species which have stood the test of time include: *I. maculata* with dark centred yellow or orange flowers; *I. monadelapha* with open flowers in unusual shadings of blue, purple, mauve, yellow and pink; *I. viridiflora* with its black eyed turquoise green flowers. The slender and dainty Corn Lilies, or Wand Flowers as they are sometimes called, prefer a sunny position in well drained well composted soil and are best planted in clumps of 10 to 15 corms. In the cooler areas they naturalise most effectively in grassy fields which can be left unmown until mid spring.

### **Lachenalia**

These neat little plants, of which there are more than 100 species, lend themselves to use in borders, rockery pockets and window boxes. The red and yellow *L. aloides* and the red and orange-red *L. bulbifera* are still popular to-day. *L. orchioides* as its variety *var*





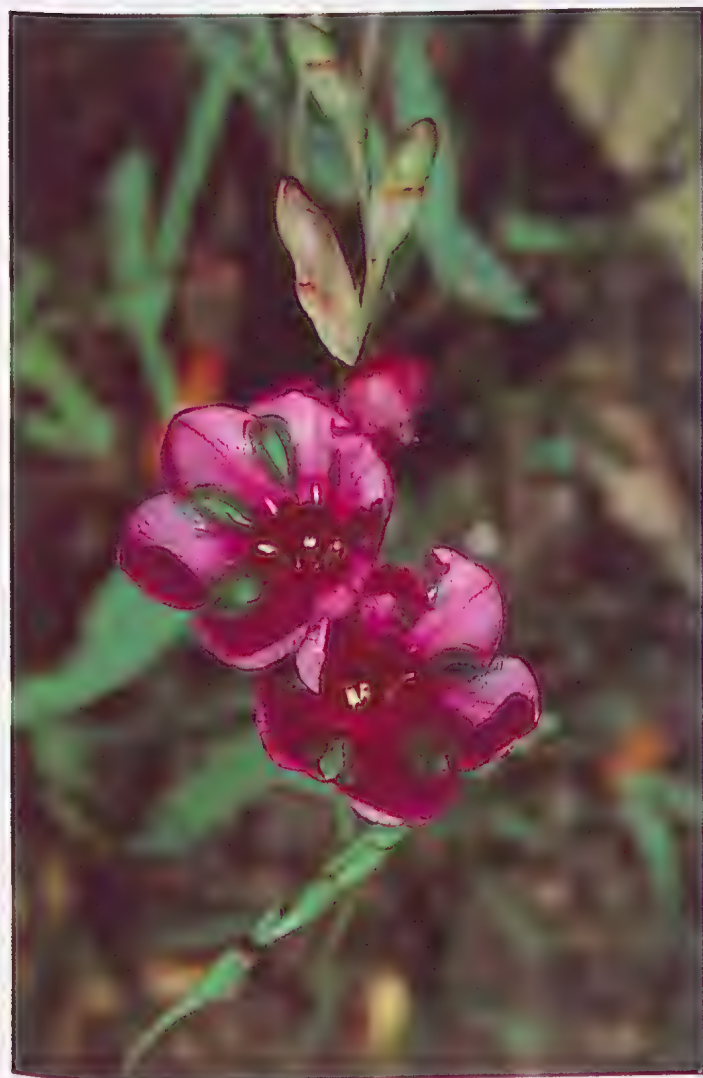
*glaucina* has long been known as the "blue lachenalia", although *L. pustulata* has blue shades which rival it and it multiplies more freely. Lachenalias do best in light soil in a sunny position and should be lifted in areas of summer rainfall.

## Sparaxis

In cultivation the six species with their numerous colour forms soon produced a wealth of brilliant hybrids. The species are worth seeking out however; the pure white elegance of *S. grandiflora*, the brilliant yellow of *S. grandiflora acutiloba* or the beautiful salmon-pink of *S. elegans*. *Sparaxis* produce numerous seeds which are easily grown, often flowering in their second year. The brightness they can bring to the garden is reflected in the common names of Kaleidoscope Flower, Velvet Flower and Harlequin Flower. A sunny position and good loamy soil are all that is required.

## Tritonia

The white, orange, pink or scarlet cup-shaped blooms of *Tritonia* are well known in Australian



(above) *Sparaxis grandiflora*

(left) *Tritonia squalida*

photos Bruce Knight

gardens, usually as hybrids. The bright orange of *T. crocata* and the delicate shell-pink of *T. squalida*, both with windowed petals, have a charm that some of the hybrids lack while performing just as well. They require similar conditions to *Sparaxis* but are also tolerant of part shade.

## Watsonia

These seem to have been for the most part relegated to drains and ditches; a great pity that a few robust weedy species have caused the neglect of a genus with much to offer. The slender pendent pink or red tubes of *W. aletroides* would grace any garden; *W. humilis* is a neat little dwarf in shades of pink and has a form called *rosea-alba* which is a charming white/pink blend although tall; *W. borbonica* with its large open lightly scented flowers in pink, mauve or white, makes a delightful display that no one should classify as weedy.







# Days of Wine and Roses

by Gail THOMAS

*The threads of business and pleasure often become interwoven in life's tapestry. Generally, wine lovers also have a strong interest in food, as the two go hand in hand, and this frequently extends to a love of gardening, sometimes itself culinary related.*

Another common interest which seems to surface more and more among wine and food loving gardeners is that of putting "colour on canvas" to express creative talents.

One such person who fits this mould is Nick Chlebnikowski, well known Melbourne wine merchant, and the man behind the "Nick's Nose Knows" slogan (although the business, Nick's Wine Merchants, was originally named after his father.)

Nick's parents, "Mr and Mrs Nick", began a grocery and delicatessen in the outer eastern Melbourne suburb of Doncaster, which at the time still had somewhat of a country atmosphere. Nick, who was an architect, and his brother Vic, who was in commerce, helped out in the family store and in 1967 the business acquired a liquor licence, with pallets of Pal making room for pallets of wine!

When the sons became fully involved in the wine business, an 800 acre property at Winchelsea, between Geelong and Colac, was purchased with the intention of later establishing a vineyard, since the region had a history of grape growing and wine making.

"Mr Nick" regularly visited the Doncaster store to see how his sons were progressing and "to keep the customers happy" would bring pumpkins and Kennebec potatoes which he had grown at Winchelsea. These potatoes, which had excellent flavour, were the best variety available at the time and were keenly sought after by the locals.

The Winchelsea Estate vineyard, with 11 acres under vine, is predominantly planted with chardonnay, with a few rows of riesling and will probably remain a "white" vineyard.

The quality of the wines being produced is excellent, and Nick summarises the region by saying:

"The countryside around Winchelsea consists of gently rolling plains interspersed with cypress and eucalyptus plantations. The close proximity to the sea necessitates a network of shelters to protect the farm animals and reduce the impact of wind upon crops. In many ways the wind is both friend and enemy; a friend in that it prolongs the coolness of summer, keeps the area relatively disease free, extends the ripening period of the vineyard and simultaneously acts to stunt growth. It is a great "editing" machine in that it blows virtually all the time and ensures that plants grow slowly and strongly. Its persistence during the spring reduces the amount of successful flowering and consequently summer crop. For the vineyard this means that yields can never be high. The maximum yield attained to date is two tonnes per acre, miniscule by industry standards. But then comes the trade-off. Small yields produce wines of high flavour concentration and grapes that produce superb wines".

The Winchelsea vineyard was established in 1980, with the first crop being harvested in 1984. The wines are sold through Nick's wine outlets, of which there are now five. As well as the original store in Doncaster, which Nick describes as "like a pair of old slippers", a second store was opened in the city of Melbourne, in Swanston Street, in 1984. Then followed Malvern and Frankston in 1989, and another city store in Elizabeth Street in late 1990. Nick's wine empire has also expanded internationally with an office in London, and the family tradition looks set to continue, as both Nick's and Vic's sons are interested in various facets of the business. Nick's sister Irene is also involved, looking after financial matters.

Nick's personal interests are reflected in his workplace. Some of his own art works hang in his city office, and his company also sponsors graduate students from the



National Gallery along with sponsorship of the Melbourne Theatre Company.

Large murals by Guiseppe Raneri, of Fitzroy, at the Malvern and Frankston stores feature wine related themes, while the counters at these stores are themselves works of art. Staves of French oak barrels from Yarra Yering vineyard have been machine-flattened to create a polished, fine grain finish. The work was done by the Melbourne School of Woodcraft, near to where Nick discovered Guiseppe Raneri's ceramics!

It is obvious that Nick's pursuit of excellence extends far beyond his business, to his support for the arts, and the production of wines of exceptional quality. The Winchelsea Estate label features the winged horse, Pegasus; as well as being the local Shire symbol and a recognisable part of Greek mythology, the winged horse also represents that restless pursuit of excellence.

The Winchelsea wines are made by Dr Bailey Carrodus of Yarra Yering vineyard in the Yarra Valley, who justifiably has gained a worldwide reputation for producing high quality wines. The Yarra Valley also has a history steeped in wine making, and the 40 acre site near Coldstream, which Dr Carrodus chose for his vineyard has been given its own appellation by the Europeans. This means it is its own region, being a particular piece of soil producing distinctive wines.

Yarra Yering wines have a simplistic label, which Dr Carrodus believes allows the wines to speak for themselves. The vineyard is planted with predominantly red grape varieties, and the Yarra Yering No 1 Dry Red has been ranked as one of the 40 great wines of the world. The 1984 vintage won a Gold Medal at Vin Expo in France, and the Yarra Yering wines are being exported to a number of countries.

Dr Carrodus is noted for his uncompromising perfection, producing wines of greatness and longevity. If a wine does not meet his specific expectations it is tipped down the drain rather than being released.

The vineyard has stunning views of the surrounding Yarra Valley, and a pond with water lilies beside the winery completes this picturesque setting.

Dr Carrodus has a wealth of knowledge, having taught at Roseworthy Agricultural College, spent time overseas at Oxford University, and in Australia with the CSIRO. As a botanist he has a keen interest in his garden as well as the vineyard. Obviously it is a true foodlover's garden. When the property was purchased in 1969 it was bare apart from a few trees. Today it is a thriving garden, heavily slanted towards culinary related plants, but it also includes some ornamentals and old fashioned roses. Edibles can still be visually appealing, and Dr Carrodus cites examples of the delightful spring blossoms of pears, apricots and apples, and the wonderful autumn contributions from ripened persimmons and the rich foliage of the medlar tree.

The Doctor is almost self sufficient with this abundant garden harvest; the size and the quality of the produce verifying that this particular piece of land contains soil which is "something special". Many of the plants are either not readily found in the trade, or are not commercially viable, making them the exclusive delights of the home gardener.

Pride of place goes to an impressive avocado which produces abundantly, as do a range of apples and pears. Three different fig trees, a stunning quince laden with fruit, and a mulberry caged for protection against the birds, add to the smorgasbord of plantings. Hops trail on a wall, a healthy *Myrtus ugni*, perfumed with strawberry flavoured berries, is another highlight, while a marionberry and numerous table grape varieties further extend the bounty. There are lettuce, tomatoes, frais de bois, purple broccoli and an extensive asparagus bed — the list goes on!

Nick and Dr Carrodus are also involved in a joint venture in a vineyard not far from Yarra Yering. It will produce red wines to be marketed under the Briarston label.

And Nick's "escape" from his days of wine? Roses!

When he informed me the Briarston label would feature a rose (a briar rose?) I immediately assumed that this reflected his love of roses. However, I was later to learn that the name originated from a combination of ➤



## Winchelsea Estate 1990 Chardonnay

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(left) Swans on the dam at Winchelsea Estate Vineyard

(below) Wine and Roses; in front 'Oklahoma', behind the miniature 'Dwarf King'.

photos Gail Thomas

two other names, Briarty Road, where the Yarra Yering vineyard is situated, and Clugston Road, a little further on, the site of the new vineyard.

I have noticed in some vineyards roses are planted at the end of each row of vines, not only providing a colourful display but also in the belief that they are good indicators, showing signs of powdery mildew before it shows on the vines. However, in Nick's opinion, vineyards are for grape vines and the home garden is the place for his beloved roses.

Gardening is not only a relaxation but "a way of working with nature". Of the 500 varieties he grows Nick is keen to swap and propagate cuttings, and sees pruning as good mental exercise. A sharp mind (and sharp secateurs) are required and he says there is no recourse with pruning decisions and any indecisiveness is on view for all to see while the plant suffers for at least a season. Likewise, the pruning of vines can have a marked effect on fruit quality and quantity, and techniques used at Yarra Yering and Winchelsea ensure crops of the highest quality.

As well as a formal rose garden Nick has extensive rose plantings flanking the driveway of the property. While his favourite roses are the sensuous red ones Nick likes to share his love of roses with his customers. On a visit to the Malvern store an ornate silver champagne bucket, brimming with blooms, was positioned prominently on the polished wooden counter. Sometime in the future this bucket will undoubtedly hold something else of which Nick will be extremely proud, a bottle of first release Winchelsea sparkling wine, from chardonnay grapes made by the authentic *methode champenoise*.

For Nick Chlebnikowski, the "days of wine and roses" are an unbeatable combination!





# A Sleeping Beauty Awakes

by *Jill FARROW*



(above) *The Dell entrance, 1991.*

(left) *The Terrace, 1989, with the Dancing Fountain and perennial border.*

*photos by courtesy of The Garden Club of Toronto*



*This tale is a storyteller's dream come true, of a castle,  
dragons, even a sleeping beauty to be rescued  
by knights and fair ladies. The castle is Casa Loma, long a visitors'  
Mecca in the heart of Toronto, Canada.*

**B**uilt at the turn of the century by Sir Henry Pellatt as his home, it complemented his glorious and extensive gardens and greenhouses. Sadly, the winds of change in the form of the 1929 Depression and newly imposed property taxes forced Sir Henry to abandon Casa Loma to the City. It was only the benevolent intervention of the local "knights" of Kiwanis International that rescued the building from demolition, as the upkeep was extensive. They leased Casa Loma from the City, and operated it as a tourist attraction, but they were not gardeners and so the beautiful gardens fell asleep under the onslaught of weeds and vines.

Until 1985, when the Kiwanis Club requested the Garden Club of Toronto to restore the gardens to their former glory. The Garden Club has created or contributed to six garden projects for Toronto in recent years, funded from the proceeds of the Club's annual flower show. The gardens at Casa Loma presented a different dimension in scope and cost; the restoration would ultimately cost \$1.5 million and necessitate a major fund raising campaign.

However, the challenge was irresistible, for Casa Loma is a well loved Toronto landmark. The restoration mandate was to blend the historical with present day function. Detailed study of the life of Sir Henry Pellatt led the Garden Club to design as he would have today — a romantic garden for a romantic castle.

The major construction took place over three years, a time frame suited to Canada's climate, and the capability to raise funds. The six acres surrounding Casa Loma divided naturally into three; a wooded hillside, a sunny terrace, and the entrance court. These evolved naturally into a wide variety of gardening experiences.

What now awaits the visitor outside this 96-room, turreted fairytale castle? Carpet beds frame the entrance to the handsomely paved entrance court, set apart from traffic to encourage the first photographs. A splashing fountain is the centre of an innovative planting combination of juniper, spirea, roses, iris, sedum and hosta. Enclosed by delicate Japanese maples, this formal area matures during the season, but maintains a constant colour and interesting form all year round.

On exiting from the Great Hall, one can look over the parapet to the 80-foot long perennial borders in all

their rainbow hues. Resist their allure and seek the entrance to the Secret Garden. This area embodies the eastern principle of controlled views, created here through the use of a pergola planted with silver lace vine, clematis and a breathtaking variety of climbing roses. It is here in the centre of the Secret Garden that the castle dragon dwells, the dragon tree sculpture with its own lovely legend. A curving descent leads to the expansive formal Lower Terrace and the Donor Walk. Engraved stones set in the paved walkway thank the many benefactors of this project. Here you will discover the sundial and an elegant, airy gazebo to frame a special group photo. Stroll the length of the classic perennial borders to meet the gargoyle who guards the spectacular Dancing Fountain. Rest on one of the many carved benches along the dividing stone wall, and survey the majestic scene.

Your visit is not complete until you explore the other side of the wall. Descend the East Staircase to the base of the hillside which was rescued from its jungle state. Under the canopy of old trees a new woodland is emerging, with wildflowers and ferns to welcome the spring, and sumac to flame in the fall. History is being repeated here, for Sir Henry planted this hillside, and built the stone staircases so well that the Garden Club was able to restore them. The pathway which connects them winds through drifts of daffodils in spring, then a maturing display of decorative grasses, interspersed with rudbeckia, bergenia and sedum. A reflecting pool awaits, its quiet waterfall hardly rippling the images of irises and water lilies. And the rest is yet to come; return to the terrace up the dell, the original carriage entrance to the castle. Here the drama of rhododendrons and azaleas, rare in Canada, is followed by waves of astilbe, roses and perennials which flourish all season.

The gardens and Casa Loma are open seven days a week, and groomed by a young and enthusiastic staff they display their beauty awakened, ever changing and anticipating your visit.



*Note: Jill Farrow is Public Relations Officer for the Casa Loma Committee of the Garden Club of Toronto.*





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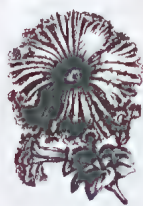
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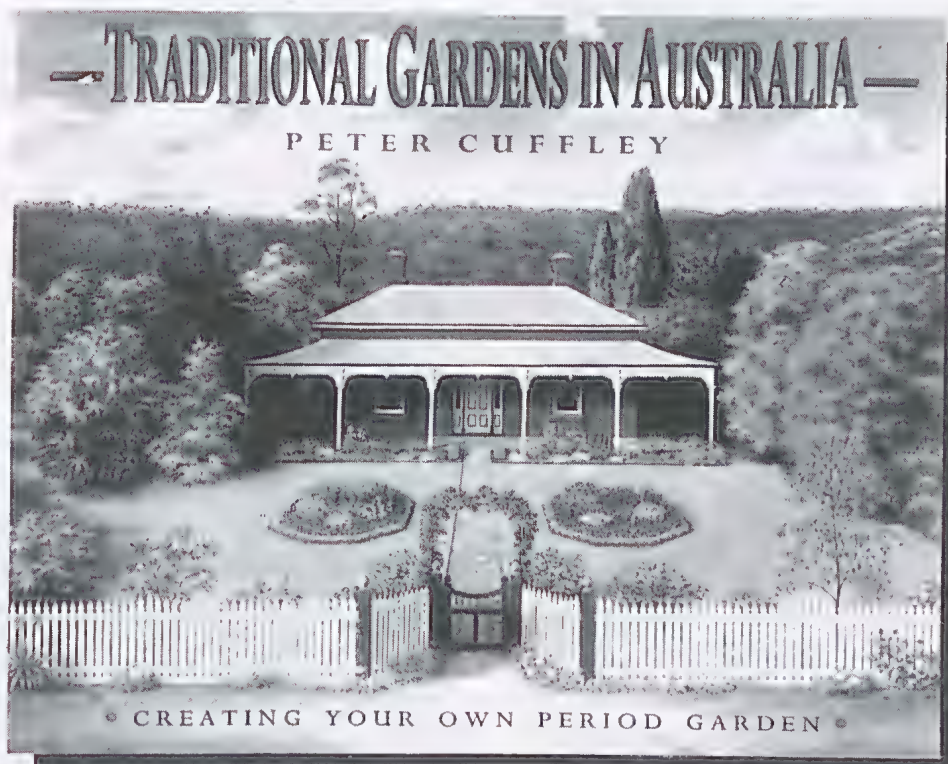


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*Tim NORTH talks to  
Judy ARNOTT, who gardens in  
the country near Coolah,  
in northern New South Wales.*

## *The Joy of a Country Garden*

**Judy, Coolah Creek has been owned by your husband's family for more than 60 years, so I imagine you inherited an already well established garden.**

We did; the "bones" of course were there, but we have altered quite a lot, replaced some trees, planted more, and all the herbaceous borders we have made in the 20 years we have lived here.

**The soil here has a high pH, hasn't it, so you were limited in what plants you could grow successfully?**

Actually, we sit on a mound of red clay, so to make the borders we dug out the clay to a depth of about three feet, carted it away, and brought in fresh soil from other parts of the property. But yes, both our soil and our water are alkaline.

**I noticed that in the borders in front of the house you have several azaleas and some rhododendrons growing in tubs. You must have some special soil mix in these.**

Yes, we had a mix specially made for these, and in addition they are watered only with rain water.

**And the azaleas in the courtyard where we are sitting, which are a dominant feature here; did you plant these?**

We completely replanted this courtyard. I love azaleas and I was determined to have them, alkaline soil

or no. So we just had to create the right conditions for them.

**I noticed that you use a lot of leafmould on the borders.**

We sweep up all the leaves by hand every autumn, put them on the compost heap, and use them as mulch the following year. We also use a lot of manure from the property.

**Does this give you a weed problem?**

We do get plenty of weeds, but the mulch helps to keep them down.

**You say that you planted a good many more trees. Was this primarily to protect the garden from wind?**

I believe very strongly that when you are planning a garden you should plant your shelter belts first, then work out what you are going to put behind them. Too many people go about it the other way round. Trees are the most important element in any garden.

---

*"...plant your  
shelter belts first,  
and then work out  
what you are  
going to put  
behind them."*

---



## Do you get much wind here?

Yes, we do. In fact this valley is called Coolahburrargundy, which means "Valley of the Winds".

## Every garden, of course, evolves and changes over time. How do you see your garden changing?

I never stop making plans, having new ideas. I suppose what I would really like is a more structured garden. I love hedges; I love being able to look at trees over the tops of hedges. We are at present reconstructing the borders on the western side of the house.

## You have a large number of roses. These must be a special favourite?

We have about a hundred roses. In particular I love the old tea roses and hybrid musks. They grow well on our soil, but we do have terrible problems with black spot. I don't use chemical sprays unless I have to — I prefer to make sure my plants grow vigorously so they don't succumb easily to disease — but with black spot we have to spray.

## Do you have any strong views on colour in the garden?

In our hot climate and with our strong light, you have to steer clear of strong colours. I believe a garden should be a peaceful, restful place, so

*"I never stop*

*making plans, having*

*new ideas."*

I stick to soft, cool colours. If I had to limit myself to one colour, it would be white.

## Yours is a large garden — 1.8 hectares in all. Do you have much help?

We have one man who works in the garden, but he is not a skilled gardener. I love the garden, it is my joy and I work in it almost every day. We do a lot of propagating, raising plants from seed and from cuttings, and I would really like a much bigger greenhouse.

## Finally, Judy, were you a gardener before you came to Coolah Creek?

My mother, who lived at Moree, was a keen gardener, so I was brought up to be aware of the garden. But I wasn't "hooked" until I had a garden of my own.



## A Country Garden Tour Around Coolah

Eight country gardens around the northern New South Wales town of Coolah were open to the public on Saturday and Sunday 19th and 20th October to raise funds to build a 10-unit hostel for aged people in the town.

From the visitor's point of view, at least, the weekend was a huge success. The garden owners had clearly worked hard to have their gardens at their seasonal best, in spite of lack of rain. Collectively, these eight gardens represented the very best traditions of the Australian country garden; they were cool, inviting, restrained in the use of colour, planted with care and imagination; all totally delightful and a joy to visit.

The weekend showed, too, what can be achieved when a small community gets behind a project. Visitors came from far and wide, even from as far away as Melbourne; the organisation was faultless, with lunches and refreshments being available in two gardens, a plant stall in another, and a craft exhibition in another.

### The eight gardens were:

Coolah Creek (Mr and Mrs Donald Arnott)  
Mount Mill (Mr and Mrs Mack Bowman)  
Cambawarra (Mr and Mrs Bill Stibbard)  
Tongy (Mr and Mrs Tim Baillieu)  
Oban (Mr and Mrs Mark Powell)  
The Rock (Mr and Mrs Sam Stephens)  
Booyamurra (Mr and Mrs John Gill)  
Baladonga (Mr and Mrs Gayford Thompson)

Publicity was very ably handled by Mrs Ruth Arnott.

The aged peoples' hostel must now be several stages nearer completion as a result of the generosity and hard work of these people and their band of helpers. T.N.





# Trading Up

by Kay OVERELL

I often think about the gardening friendship between Phyllis Reiss and Margery Fish. I like to imagine Phyllis Reiss driving from the architectural discipline of her garden, Tintinhull, to visit the flower-for-every-day abundance of Margery Fish's East Lambrook Manor. The two women must have been as different as daphne and diosma, their gardens certainly were, and yet imagine the plants and information and jokes they must have traded.

In this Margery and Phyllis story of mine I like to think their profound differences created a friendship free from the creeping poison of competing at the same style. I understand this type of gardening relationship as I once had a similar friend.

I met this friend at the nursery where she was a part time sales assistant. "Do you know anyone with a big, old patch of agapanthus?" I overheard her ask someone. "I have one", I said.

"Now what can I get for you", she asked when the agapanthus were loaded into her van. That was how I found out that my friend was that rarest of human beings, a true trader, measure for measure, maybe a penny more, but never a penny less.

Beyond being a trader she was an awesome networker. You could ask her for anything obscure, all the plants that nurseries don't carry and she could come up with it. She was so good at this I assumed, despite the English accent, that she must have lived in the area for ever. As it turned out, she hadn't lived there for as long as I had.

The agapanthus incident took place at a time in my life when I was knee deep in *Nigella* and *Rugosas*, with Seafoam on the fences, when I agonised how I could keep vulgar yellow out of the scheme of things, when plants were moved endlessly around and around until the perfect

position was located, when "shape up or ship out" was my constant reminder to the occupants of my garden. My friend on the other hand was the original magpie and bow-erbird, a plant accumulator on the grand scale, a believer in the adage "they're all happier just put in together", a maker of riots of colour. On aesthetics we agreed to disagree, there were too many other things to get on with, too many plants to be hunted down and captured.

As our trading relationship developed I used to love it when she visited my garden because among many other things she noticed my hard won topsoil and she never told me how "lucky" I was to have such "good soil". Few people really understand the amount of work the creation of a decent topsoil requires. When I saw her garden I realised why she never called me "lucky".

Her place was up Newport way on a steep rocky shore of Pittwater, looking the west right in the eye. What can only be called the cliff, between the house and the water, had been terraced with substantial planting pockets of old bricks, which she told me offhandedly she had built herself. Her husband, who I never met, was some sort of military person and away for periods of time wherein she kept busy terracing this formidable cliff. She was the sort of empire building Englishwoman who in the 1950s might have worked alongside her husband in the coffee plantations of Kenya with a gun on her hip and a sharp eye for the glint of a panga in the hedges. As a child, after the Mau Mau had relieved the white man of his East African burden some of these uprooted colonials had come through our house so it was early on that I learned of the type. And I'm not referring to the decadent Happy Valley aristocrats but to the despised middle class soldier settlers who lost every-

thing. My friend could definitely have been one of the latter, with her dragging all those bricks down that cliff — it was far too steep for a wheelbarrow — and back filling the masonry pockets with soil that she had no doubt bartered for this or that. She didn't seem to have much money to spend, but she had the ingenuity of the true colonial.

The baking hot pockets of brick she had planted with all the spilling compositae that ever grew in the sands of the African Cape. It was a colour riot on that cliff which you couldn't be snooty about. It was too abundant, too much of a miracle that it could be there at all.

Further up the block of land between the road and the house, beneath the eucalypts, grew all the clivias and Sydney rock orchids you would expect to find on a shaded slope. As well, that was where she kept her huge and varied stash of trading plants, scores of obscure potted treasures. I still have a red-tipped fern she gave me the first day I saw her collection, which I don't recall ever having seen in a nursery and which I think is called *Doodia media*. Inside the house was a breathtaking mess, the sort that takes real courage to tough out in a middle class suburb. There were sagging chairs and piles of military magazines. It was the military that finally ended our friendship. One day with barely a backward glance she packed up and moved on, transferred to some other place. She has probably made several impossible gardens since then and some other lucky women are trading with her now, taking advantage of the network she seemed able to put quickly in place wherever she landed. The reason I've been thinking of her lately is that I'm wanting a tree dahlia, nobody seems to sell them and it's just the sort of thing she could have whipped out of her hat.





# The Urban Woodland

by Suzanne PRICE



*Beneath the spreading branches  
In the cool dancing shade  
The urban woodland's brightest gems  
Are ever on parade.*

*We catch a glimpse to tease us  
And lure us on our way.  
We must follow every winding path  
To see the full display.*

## What is the Urban Woodland?

It is basically a woodland as it applies to urban gardens. Most gardeners or prospective gardeners have seen or can visualise the woodland section of extensive old gardens, with a high canopy of large deciduous trees, bold banks of massed rhododendrons, azaleas and other shade loving shrubs, extensive drifts of bluebells and primroses and similar woodland ground plants. Structurally, the urban woodland is a miniature version of this, contracted and adjusted to suit the size and conditions of small gardens.

In brief, the urban woodland is a garden of three layers. The upper storey consists of the canopy of small, and perhaps medium, deciduous trees which covers all the garden except those areas which actually require full sun. The understorey, or eye level zone, has boundary screens of shrubs for privacy and wind protection, and peninsulas of shrubs within the garden for further protection and to create the interest of partially hidden pictures. The ground level is a dense carpet of woodland ground plants chosen to

co-ordinate with nearby trees and shrubs to provide full garden pictures or secondary pictures. Paths disappear from view around the peninsulas, enticing one to venture further to parts of the garden which cannot be seen in a single sweep of the eyes.

As a garden style, however, it goes much further than this, for it incorporates the "ten commandments" of garden design (see the last issue of this Journal).

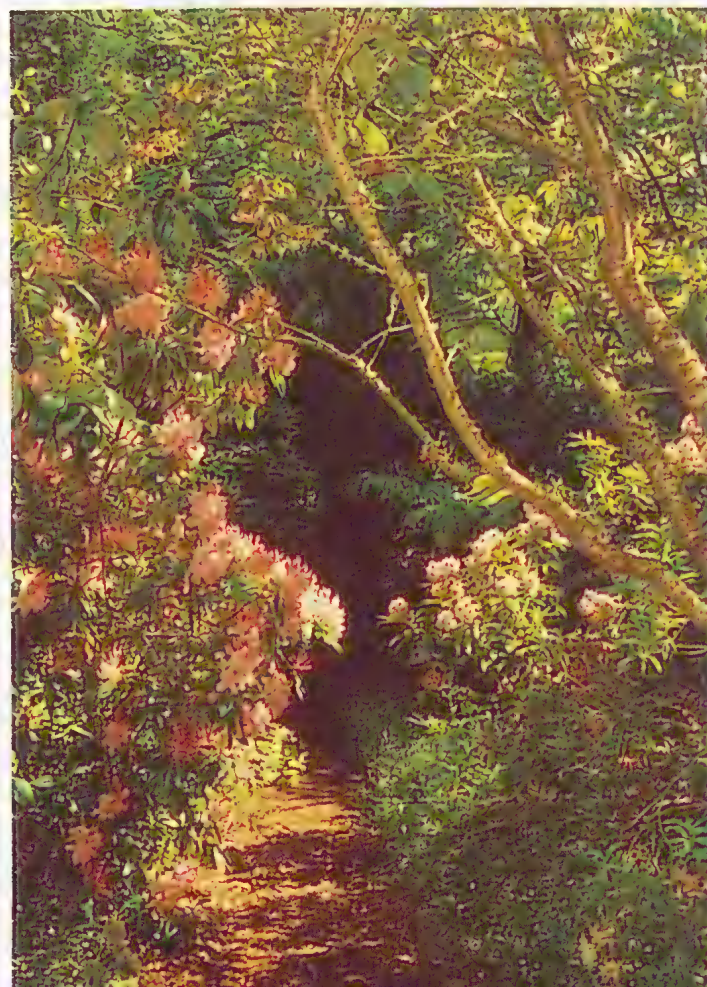
These fundamental design principles apply to all garden styles, but the urban woodland is the only style which is actually created to suit them. Designed in accordance with these ten principles, the urban woodland will be balanced in every respect and will create a cool, sheltered micro-climate capable of supporting a complete ecosystem.

The urban woodland then becomes a garden for all seasons. It is cool and inviting in summer; in autumn it is ablaze with the full range of autumn colours; winter is fascinating for the background shrubs emerge to display their winter foliage or flowers, the barks of the trees assume an ➤





*photos Suzanne Price*



important role, and the shapes of the trees become obvious as the tracery of the branches is seen against the dark winter sky. Spring is a time of anticipation as the leaf buds expand each day in an amazing range of greens and bronze, burgundy, pink and copper. As the days grow hotter, the leaves expand and the canopy is renewed to protect the garden through another season.

## **Why Have It?**

Many people would consider that the beauty of the urban woodland is sufficient reason for creating one, for it is a garden which is beautiful every day of the year; a delight to live in as the pictures come and go with the changing of the seasons. But there are many more benefits of an urban woodland than simply its visual appeal.

## **The urban environment —**

Anti pollution device; as we know, trees and shrubs are Nature's air filters, absorbing carbon dioxide from the air and giving off oxygen. Some trees are also capable of absorbing some of the other chemicals which pollute the air of our cities. So the more urban gardens there are with a tree canopy, the cleaner will be the air of our cities and towns.



Aesthetics; such gardens also have great aesthetic value, partly because they are objects of great beauty in their own right, and also because they can disguise much of the urban ugliness.

**So your urban woodland will benefit and beautify your neighbourhood.**

## **The garden environment —**

Clean air; just as our plants help to clean the air outside our gardens, so the air which filters through the canopy and the boundary screen is a great deal cleaner and healthier than unfiltered air.

Safe surroundings; because chemicals are never used in the urban woodland, and because the canopy and screen reduce the inward drift of airborne chemicals, the gardener is less likely to be exposed to dangerous chemicals in the air, in the soil and on the plants.

Quieter atmosphere; the trees and the boundary shrubs also absorb a great deal of the external noise, reducing noise pollution within the garden, resulting in a more relaxed and enjoyable lifestyle.

Weather protection; the canopy protects the garden (and the house if the trees are positioned correctly) from the summer sun, but allows winter sun to penetrate. It also provides a degree of protection from frost. The screens of shrubs protect the garden from both hot and

cold winds. Thus it is a garden style which is appropriate for most climatic zones.

More birds; the trees and some of the larger shrubs provide homesites for a variety of birds, many of which will become permanent residents. As well as being beautiful to look at and to listen to, the birds aid in the garden's maintenance by eating insect pests and weed seeds.

The canopy; a very appealing and secluded atmosphere is created within the garden by the leafy roof overhead. The garden seems to be a much more intimate place.

Shade; the dappled shade of varying densities creates a myriad of patterns dancing and fluttering within the garden. This is another of the charms of the urban woodland which gardens without canopies lack.

Variety; the canopy and the screening shrubs create cool conditions in summer to allow for the inclusion in warm climates of woodland plants which are traditionally only grown in cool climates. In the sunny pockets, protected from the cold winds, many warm climate plants will thrive in cool areas. Thus the garden can be comprised of plants from a wide range of climatic zones.

**The urban woodland promotes a happier and healthier environment within your garden.**

## **The low maintenance garden —**

Lawns; lawn maintenance is the biggest single gardening task, and it never becomes less as the years go by. The ➡





## *The Urban Woodland, continued*

only way to decrease it is to have less lawn. The urban woodland often contains no lawn at all. Where a lawn does exist it is only as much as is actually used, so the time spent on lawn maintenance is not purely for appearance sake.

Weeding; a tree canopy creates shade, which inhibits the growth of the majority of weeds, and most of those which survive will be smothered by the mulch and the shade loving ground plants.

**The more established your urban woodland becomes, the less weeding will be required.**

Mulching; mulch, particularly in the form of fallen leaves, is helpful in the garden in many ways; it insulates the soil from heat and cold; insulates the roots of plants from heat and cold; reduces evaporation; smothers weeds; reduces soil erosion; produces nutrients which feed the plants; adds humus to the soil, improving its quality and making it healthier; encourages the increase of worm populations, which aerate the soil and feed the plants; and encourages the increase of helpful bacteria. It even has an aesthetic advantage, for leaf mulch is pleasanter to look at than bare earth. The urban woodland mulches itself, for the deciduous trees and shrubs will, when established, provide ample for the garden's needs.

Watering; together the shade and the mulch keep the soil cool and reduce the rate of evaporation during dry weather, and the plants in the garden are suitable for the climatic conditions, so once the urban woodland is established, there is rarely a need for artificial watering.

Pruning; as with any style of garden, to reduce maintenance in the form of pruning and clipping, you need to avoid plants which require these tasks, and you must place plants carefully so that they don't need pruning to clear paths and windows. In the urban woodland plants are encouraged to achieve their natural habit of growth, so they are not pruned or clipped on a regular basis.

Digging; apart from the initial digging prior to planting and mulching, the soil of the urban woodland is never dug over, for this disturbs or damages roots, scarifies weed seeds so that they germinate, disrupts the balance of helpful micro-organisms and disturbs and reduces the worm populations. In fact, digging is detrimental and destructive to the garden.

Feeding; while the bacteria are decomposing the mulch to form humus, nutrients are continually produced. In addition to this, the plants of the urban woodland constantly have at their disposal two supplies of slow release plant food — humus and worm casts. So the work of artificially feeding the plants is never necessary in the urban woodland.

**The urban woodland actively reduces its maintenance requirements as each year goes by.**

### **Chemical free gardening —**

Balanced ecosystem; in the microclimate created by an urban woodland, a balance exists between pests and their predators. There will be no need for insecticides.

Healthy plants; the healthy soil created by the increased humus level and by the activity of worms and bacteria and other micro-organisms will produce healthy plants which can resist fungal diseases or co-exist compatibly with them. There will be no need for fungicides.

Weed control; the combination of the shade, the mulch, the ground plants and your own mild exertion will control weeds. There will be no need for herbicides.

Self nourishment; the mulch, the humus and the worm casts will provide ample nutrients for all the plants. There will be no need for chemical fertilisers.

Water; the established urban woodland in which natural cycles are encouraged will require little or no artificial watering, so you will not be inadvertently pouring onto your garden the chemical additives, predominantly chlorides and fluorides, which are in urban water supplies.

**In these ways the urban woodland actually encourages chemical-free gardening.**

### **How To Achieve It**

You can create an urban woodland from scratch in a new garden, or by renovating an existing garden. Either way, it should be carefully planned according firstly to your needs of the garden, and secondly to the "ten commandments" of garden design.

You will first need to decide where the paths through your garden are to be, making sure that the main paths are comfortably wide, and that they curve gently if this is practicable. The secondary paths, or sneak tracks, should create easily accessible areas as they ramble through the garden.

Space generally dictates that the urban woodland cannot be comprised of the larger species of trees which grow in natural deciduous forests, and it cannot contain the large species of such trees as oak, elm, beech, ash and liquidambar which are frequently grown in the woodland sections of large gardens (and all too frequently grown in small gardens). Fortunately, though, there are numerous small and medium deciduous trees which are appropriate for the smaller garden.

These deciduous trees, then, are the principle ingredients of the urban woodland. A selection which varies in ultimate height from four to eight or nine metres should be planted so that, when established, they will meet overhead to create a canopy. Larger gardens can contain some taller trees which will provide a higher canopy. Just as the top of the canopy will vary in height, so too should the underside. Careful removal of some of the lower branches will achieve this, and will allow comfortable headroom both for people and for the ground plants. The leafy canopy provides the dappled shade and the annual leafmould, and allows access to the winter sun, all of which are fundamental elements of the woodland garden. If the canopy covers 70% to 80% of the garden, some protected but sunny pockets can be incorporated into the design. Such areas can receive all the morning sun and be protected by the trees from the afternoon sun. This is a favoured aspect of many lovely plants.

Surround your garden with a screen of evergreen shrubs. As already mentioned, these boundary and background



shrubs will prevent the inward drift of many chemicals and they will also help to clean the air which filters through them. They provide privacy, protection from strong winds and wind-born weed seeds, and will even reduce noise levels within the home and garden.

Within the garden use a variety of shrub groupings, not necessarily all evergreen, to segment the garden for further protection and to provide the interest of hidden or partially hidden sections. A grouping of shrubs placed next to the curve of a path will disguise what is beyond. The idea is not to divide the garden into regular spaces with dense hedges, but to provide interest and variety. Some of the groups of shrubs could be low enough to be peeped over, some could be tall and elegant, and some light and lacy.

Cover the ground well with ground plants and intersperse them with a generous layer of mulch. These plants will provide the carpet of full, three-layer pictures, so will create secondary pictures in another season. Initially, they will need to be sun tolerant or be plants which are happy in both sun and shade. As the canopy develops, true woodlanders which require the dappled shade can be incorporated.


Because the majority of the urban woodland's benefits are increased as it gains in maturity, your first task after planting will be to assist it to establish as quickly as possible. A plant is not established until its roots are out of the planting hole and growing in the soil of the garden, so everything you do in the establishment stage is aimed at encouraging that.

Even though you will mulch each section of your garden after planting, it is important to ensure that new plants remain mulched so that their roots are insulated from heat and cold and do not dry out, and so that weeds which will compete for water and nutrients do not become established. The mulch creates humus-filled soil into which the roots will eagerly grow. Quite often in new gardens, especially in light soils, the first layers of mulch will be rapidly absorbed into the soil or, on exposed sites, disturbed by the wind. It is an important job during establishment to replenish this mulch as soon as the soil is exposed. Initially you will have to beg, borrow or otherwise acquire the mulch, but after a few years the fallen leaves from your canopy will provide the most important ingredient of a healthy garden.

While your urban woodland is establishing, new plants will need regular watering, preferably in the evening to avoid evaporation loss. This should be applied as deep soakings with a fine, light spray, avoiding flooding and de-oxygenating the soil. Such watering will encourage moisture seeking root systems and drought resistant plants. These soakings are given less frequently each summer until, after about three or four years, artificial watering is no longer necessary. Don't be tempted to use drip irrigation, keeping the soil around the roots continually damp. Not only does this make plants shallow rooted and drought prone, it keeps dissolved salts and also the chemicals which got through your filter system of plants constantly in the root zone. They are unable to be deposited lower down or to leach away as some of them inevitably would with a falling water table. In the damp soil these chemicals may more readily combine into even more deadly compounds.

In the first seasons after planting there will be many weeds, despite your preparation, and they must consistently be removed before they seed. As the urban woodland establishes, the mulch will smother many weeds and will prevent others from germinating, and appropriate ground plants will do the same. But it is the shade cast by the tree canopy and other plants which is the greatest weapon against weeds. Here lies the secret of the urban woodland's success, for most of the plants which we call weeds are sun lovers, and even such persistent weeds as couch and sorrel weaken and die in shade. However, despite the shade, the mulch and the ground covers, some weeds will always appear. If these are pulled out by hand the soil is further aerated and the gardener receives some gentle exercise.

Don't despair in the establishment years. Be confident in the knowledge that each season's growth brings you a step further towards achieving the ideal garden; a private, protected and beautiful self-perpetuating ecosystem of your own creation.

To sum it all up, the urban woodland is a beautiful garden of healthy soil, healthy plants, healthy birds and insects and a healthy environment in which to live. 

*Note: this is the second condensed version of a chapter in Suzanne Price's forthcoming book, the tentative title of which is "The Urban Woodland". The first, "The Ten Commandments of Garden Design" appeared in our October/November issue this year.*



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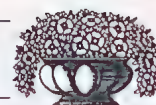
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## PRODUCT NEWS



### A new garden shredder

Black and Decker have introduced a new and updated Garden Shredder, model GA100, which has enough power to shred branches up to 2.5 cm in diameter. It incorporates two feeders, the main one for small branches and twigs, the other for thicker branches. Each Black and Decker Garden Shredder comes with a one year repair warranty. The recommended retail price is \$369.

### Steel Cement

Steel cement is a recent building innovation that uses blast furnace slag, the by-product of steel manufacture, to make a stronger and more durable cement which gives more elasticity and makes trowelling a lot easier. This innovative steel cement is sold under the name Australian Builders' Cement by ICL and distributed to nursery outlets and hardware stores by ICL's subsidiary, Building Products Supplies.

### Making outdoor timber last longer

The most widely used timber preservative method is pressure treating the timber at a treatment plant with a special preservative known by the brand name 'Tanalith'. This will increase the life of treated timber by up to ten times that of untreated timber. Another timber treatment product recently released by Koppers-Hickson is known as 'Weatherwood', which makes the treated timber weather resistant as well as resistant to attack by fungi and termites.

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### A new pond liner

'Sealepta' rubber liners are manufactured in black 2-ply rubber sheeting with hot vulcanised joints. It has outstanding resistance to ageing, weathering, ozone, oxygen, and many chemicals. It has high and low temperature resistance as well as steam and water resistance. The operational temperature range is from minus 40 to plus 120 degrees Celsius.

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### An automatic water control valve.

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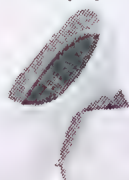
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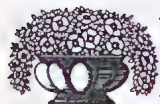
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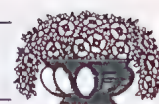


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## GARDEN CUTTINGS



### Weeding by the moon

Two scientists at the Botanisches Institut der Universität, at Erlangen in Germany, have found a dramatic difference in weed growth between areas cultivated in daylight and in darkness. Test plots which were cultivated at night had 40 times fewer weeds growing after cultivation as plots cultivated during the day.

The researchers believe that even the tiny amount of light received by a weed seed when it is momentarily lifted and exposed before being turned under again during cultivation is enough to trigger germination, whereas cultivation at night had no such effect.

Midnight gardening may yet take on!

### George Eastman House

The restoration of the garden at George Eastman House was the subject of an article in this journal, Aug/Sept 1991. The International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House has recently announced the appointment of Deidre Cunningham as the Museum's new landscape curator. Originally from Binghamton, New York, Deidre Cunningham received her master's degree in Landscape Architecture from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and her undergraduate training in horticulture from Hartwick College in Oneonta, New York. She recently completed internships at the landscape ecology and planning office in Schorndorf in Germany and the Institute for Hydraulic Structures and Rural Engineering at the University of Karlsruhe, Germany.

As landscape curator, she will be responsible for maintaining and interpreting the historic landscape at Eastman House. The ever changing collection includes the restored terrace garden, which opened to the public last summer, the recreated west garden, and the historically adapted

library garden. She will work with the Museum's garden restoration committee and the historic garden designers on the 1991/92 restoration of Mr Eastman's rock garden, located in the grape arbor.

### A rose calendar for 1992

The New Zealand Calendar Company has once again produced a beautiful calendar of old rose watercolours by Nancy Tichborne. Last year, in spite of the print run being doubled, the calendar was a sell-out; for 1992 a wider selection of flowers from New Zealand gardens has been included, in addition to old roses, and once again cats are included in many of the paintings.

The calendars are printed in special fade-resistant inks to allow for future framing; the cover is 320 gsm glazed artboard and the paper for the individual plates is 128 gsm Japanese matt art paper. The 1992 calendar is available from the New Zealand Calendar Company, Box 1653, Rotorua, New Zealand for \$A20.00; personal cheques will be accepted.

### Headspace analysis

Some highly fragrant flowers contain no oils that can be turned into perfume, so their scent has never been encapsulated; hyacinths and freesias are examples. Now a technology called "headspace analysis" involves covering a living flower with a glass bulb connected to an air pump and a filter. The chemically lined filter collects the aroma molecules given off by the flowers; after a few hours the bulb and filter are removed and the molecules analysed and charted. The results can be decoded to tell exactly which ingredients make up the unique smell of each flower, and this can then be synthesised using the same molecular configuration. Headspace analysis has been used to dramatically expand the number of scents available to people who make fragrances.

### Oddball laws

The USA, and no doubt other countries as well, can boast of a number of pieces of oddball legislation affecting gardeners. Magnolia, in Arkansas, has an old law that prohibits a man from soliciting a woman to assist him with garden chores; there is nothing, however, to prevent the reverse. An old Rhinelander, Wisconsin, law forbids anyone weighing more than 300 pounds and wearing shorts to work in a garden that can be seen from the street, while in McCloud, California, you must not eat ice cream with a fork while sitting in a garden. If you live in Guymon, Oklahoma, you must on no account plough your garden with an elephant.

One law which may be useful here is still on the statute book in Clarendon, Texas; it says that an attorney can be banned from practising law should he refuse to accept garden produce in lieu of legal fees.

(from 'American Horticulturist' News Edition, Sept 1991.)

### Rainforest seeds

The Rainforest Seed Collective, previously Bellingen Valley Rainforest Seeds, has been set up primarily as a means of networking rainforest seed collectors around Australia. This will be done by means of a quarterly newsletter, to be distributed to members at a cost of \$10 per year, or \$5 for those who offer seeds. One main benefit of networking will be that people will be encouraged to buy seed from a local source; rainforest trees from other areas can be very vigorous and may compete with local species.

Those who can collect rainforest seeds in their own area are asked to let the Collective know what seeds they can collect. Their name, contact telephone number and a list of seeds available, will then be included in the next newsletter. The address is Rainforest Seed Collective, Private Mail Bag, Bellingen, NSW 2454.



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# Mr Bruno's Garden

*With typical Italian love of the soil, and with a will for trying something a little different, Mr Bruno has a garden that overflows with produce over summer and autumn. Jane EDMANSON reports on this garden at Winchelsea, in Victoria's Western District.*

There is something particularly satisfying in seeing fruit and vegetables growing en masse. There are people who seem to be able to grow more quantity and better quality than the average gardener. I often wonder what their secret is.

To grow vegetables requires just as much thought in selection and care as it does for the most flamboyant flower garden. I always admire gardeners who can grow home-grown goodness in abundance.

This is what struck me on visiting Mr Bruno's garden. His love of growing, his feeling for the soil, has meant that his garden is a joy for all to see.

Mr Bruno started life in Australia as a farm worker, having emigrated from Italy after World War II. As so many other immigrants have proved, gardening was a part of their old life, tilling the soil to produce a wonderful crop of edibles. On the tour of inspection of his vegetable patch it revealed a marvellous variety, especially at the time I saw it, which was late summer.

There was silver beet, potatoes, corn, radish, cauliflower and a selection of pumpkins including golden nugget and butternut. Italian favourites of eggplant, basil, long and round capsicums, and of course a range of tomatoes were prominent, as Mrs Bruno said she was making sauce.

Also in the garden was a wire rack with vibrant red Roma tomatoes drying in the sun. These would be enjoyed in the colder months when there were no fresh tomatoes to be picked, but Mr Bruno said he is usually able to pick fresh tomatoes for eight months of the year! One row of tomatoes was nearing the end of its season, and in front of that a row of broccoli had already been planted to get a head start for the coming season. Romanesco broccoli with its paler green heads which have castle-like points, is another favourite and although this variety is still new to many gardeners Mr Bruno said he grew it in Italy in the 1940s and discovered seed here in 1954; he has been growing it ever since.

I was more than impressed with the size of some mature cabbages, and was interested to learn if there

were any secrets to their success. Mr Bruno's philosophy is that "if you look after the ground, it will look after you. Let the ground get angry, and you will get angry". He fertilises the garden with chicken manure, urea and a mixture with a 2:2:1 NPK ratio. The chicken shed in the back yard is a more than likely source of home grown manure, and no doubt the well fed chickens regularly provide the household with fresh eggs.

There were a number of pepino plants in the garden, and Mr Bruno explained that each year, around July, he takes cuttings from the established plant and grows on new bushes, since after a couple of years the size and quality of the fruit tends to diminish. This was obvious from the ripening fruit, as newer plants had almost twice the size of fruit as did the older ones.

When it comes to grafting, I am yet to see a selection to surpass Mr Bruno's handiwork! Citrus trees are predominant in the area directly behind the house, and as well as the usual lemon tree there were oranges, mandarins and grapefruit, some double grafted like a mandarin with an orange. Just beside these were cherry trees and a persimmon literally groaning with its tangerine-orange fruit. The grafting of various fruits onto rootstock is one of Mr Bruno's specialities.

Grafting, of course, offers many advantages, including the one many of us have problems with — space! Nurseries often stock trees with two or three varieties grafted on for this reason, as well as giving a longer fruiting season by having early and late ripening varieties. But what about five different pears on one tree, or six apples including Red and Golden Delicious, Granny Smith, Gavenstein and Seedling all being harvested at different intervals? As well as a young nashi which is yet to fruit, Mr Bruno said he is able to pick pears regularly from February through to June.

Cross pollination is also necessary with many fruit trees and here again grafting provides the suitable varieties. Had I not been impressed by all this, there was more to come. One tree had a total of 24 grafts! Among





(above) Mr and Mrs Bruno  
(below) part of the vegetable garden

photos Gail Thomas

these were about 15 varieties of plum, three of apricot, nectarines, peaches, plumcots and peacharine.

Of course, Mr Bruno's garden is fairly substantial by comparison with that of many home gardeners, and he is lucky to be able to grow such a diverse range of plants for both culinary and ornamental use. The number of fruit trees may seem extensive, but when one considers the varieties carried on them by grafting the space saving advantages are almost astronomical for the allotted amount of garden area.

Mr and Mrs Bruno are proud of their garden and rightly so. The week prior to my visit a "Back to Winchelsea" event was held, which saw busloads of visitors admiring this well designed and productive local garden, which has gained a fitting reputation. The family is not only generous in agreeing to share their garden, but also the tips on methods of growing and propagation which ensure the success of all the crops planted.

As we toured the garden, some of its bounty was gathered along the way for me to take home, another reflection of the kindness and generosity so often seen in gardeners. Mr and Mrs Bruno are to be commended for their dedicated gardening expertise and devotion to their land.





# More Plant Profiles

from **Stephen RYAN**, of *Dicksonia Rare Plants*, Mount Macedon.

## Something for the Dark Side

In nearly every garden is a dry shaded spot. It may be a south facing wall under the eaves or under the canopy of large trees with strong moisture seeking roots everywhere.

It can be a big problem to find quality plants for such a position and as long as you are not looking for something with a bright splash of colour and are content with a shrub of quiet charm and elegance then you may decide on *Sarcococca ruscifolia*, from China.

The genetic name comes from the Greek *Sarkos* meaning fleshy and *kokkas*, a berry, which makes this strange name logical.

In England it is known as Christmas Box, as it flowers and fruits in winter and looks like the box bush we use for hedging, and it is nice to know that it is also related to box.

As the photograph shows its rich red berries are quite large and showy. However, you will have to look closely to see the tiny green-white flowers. These blooms do have a lovely fragrance that more than makes up for their lack of size.

The shrub will grow to rather less than two metres, and although it can be trimmed or cut (the foliage and berries last well in a vase) its natural arching habit is one of its major assets so I only cut an odd limb or two for the house so as not to ruin its shape.

Although not fussy about soil, and equally happy in acid or alkaline conditions as well as being able to cope with quite dry conditions, to get the best from it the soil should be well cultivated and humus added to give it a good start. Keep it well watered for the first summer or so until its roots are well established.

Once it is under way it is an easy plant for the shady spot.

## A Tasmanian Treasure

It always amazes me that we have in this country that decision will be "go native" or won't we?

In most countries the question most gardeners ask is "Will this plant do the job required of it" not "where does it come from".

After all, what are those national borders we inflict on plants? If history had been a little different, Western Australia might well have been settled by someone other than the British and thus become a separate country. Had New Zealand joined us at Federation their flora would then have been Australian. New Guinea was ours for some time and the Australian National Botanic Gardens in Canberra had *Vireya* rhododendrons from New Guinea on display (they may still have).

Tasmania, as we all know, is an island with a remarkable flora which includes many endemic species. Just as easily it too could have been a separate country (some people still seem to think it is!).

This leads me to one of my favourite Tasmanian native plants, one that most native plant growers don't seem to stock and one which some of them may not even know about.

The plant in question is *Anopterus glandulosus*, or Tasmanian Native Laurel. When you first see it in flower you could be excused for believing that it is ericaceous. It does have leathery rich green foliage clustered towards the top of the stems, rather like a rhododendron, and the lovely flowers remind me of kalmias and pieris. It does best in acid, moist but not wet soil, with a cool aspect and looks better mixed



(left) *Sarcococca ruscifolia*



with the plants just mentioned rather than with, say, a batch of grevilleas.

*Anopterus* is in fact a member of the escallonia family (Escalloniaceae or, in some books, Saxifragaceae). It is a slow growing shrub that may reach two to three metres in gardens, although it may be taller in the wild; it produces its lovely, usually white, flowers in spring. Each bell is about one centimetre in diameter, and the flowers are produced in racemes up to 15 cm long.

In beds already planted with rhododendrons and azaleas this plant will look quite at home, alternatively you may like to grow it as a tub specimen in a fernery or under trees.

The form in the photograph is the pale pink one often found in the wild but to my knowledge never given a varietal name. It is possibly an even better plant than the white form, as its leaves are darker with red petioles and dormant buds.



(above) *Anopterus glandulosus*

photos Stephen Ryan

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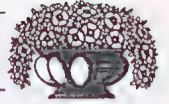
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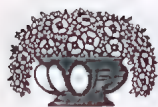
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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS, Home & Overseas

### DECEMBER

7th Dec: Farmers' Market, the Fresh Centre, Footscray Road, Footscray, Vic; 7.30 am to 3.00 pm. Local produce at market prices direct from the grower. Enquiries (03)687.1392.

### FEBRUARY

8th and 9th Feb: Brisbane Herb happening; the Auditorium, Mount Coot-tha Botanic Gardens, Toowong. Details from Pennyroyal Herb Farms, Bundaberg (071)55.1622.

29th Feb to 8th March: Exhibition of Art — "Forest, Fruit and Flowers"; Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Lion Gate Lodge, Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney.

### MARCH

14th — 15th March: NSW Begonia Society's Annual Exhibition, Harvey-Lowe Pavilion, Castle Hill Showground, Carrington Road, Castle Hill, 10.00 am to 4.00 pm. Wide range of begonias for sale.

### APRIL

15th April to 11th October: Floriade 1992, Zoetermeer, Netherlands.

20th April to 12th October: Ameriflora '92, Columbia Park, Ohio.

30th April to 16th May: Tour arranged to visit "Floriade" in Holland — Spend 4 days in Vienna — Lake Constance and travel the romantic road through Germany to Holland — Join Tim and Keva North — contact Australian Garden Journal Bowral office (048) 614 999

### JUNE

6th — 10th June: 1992 Pacific Rim International Horticultural Exhibition, Juan de Fuca Recreation Centre, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. Enquiries Rosamund McLean, 1022 Cook Street, Victoria, BC, V8V 3Z5, Canada.

*News items for inclusion in "Calendar of Events; Home and Overseas" must reach our editorial office by letter or fax no less than seven weeks before the first day of the month of issue.*

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**Editor**

**TIM NORTH**

**Art, Circulation and Subscriptions**  
**ANN FOGARTY**

**National Advertising Director**  
**KEVA NORTH**

**Advertising, New South Wales  
and ACT**

**Bob Hill,**

73 Clanville Rd, Roseville, NSW 2069

tel (02) 416.4245; fax (02) 416.5064

**Advertising, Victoria and South  
Australia**

**Lesley de Meyrick,**

17 Hampden Rd, Armadale, Vic 3143

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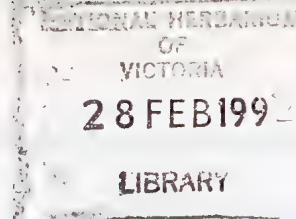
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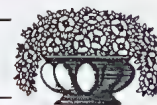
# Garden Journal



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*Front cover: Native grasslands usually have tussock grasses with flowers between them. The  
Everlasting or Paper Daisies, Helichrysum scorpioides, and H. apiculatum and the Chocolate  
Lily, Dichopogon strictus, all attract butterflies. photo by David Clode*



## In Our Next Issue —

- John Zwar writes about an important development now well under way in South Australia — the Arid Lands Botanic Garden at Port Augusta.
- Nathan Perkins, the only Master Craftsman drystone waller working outside the United Kingdom, contributes the first of two articles on the techniques of making a drystone wall.
- Deane Ross writes about “Changing Fashions in Roses” and Arnold Teese describes some of the most interesting and attractive varieties of maple — including some not so well known.
- Grant Davies writes about the genus *Tulipa* (this unavoidably held over from this issue), Nancy Beckham discusses some alternatives to the conventional front lawn, and Ross McKinnon takes us to Jimbour House, on the black soil plains of Queensland’s Darling Downs.
- plus the usual book reviews, Garden Cuttings, etc.

all in the May/July issue of

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# Expanding Horizons

I have always believed that there is a natural affinity between gardening and cooking. To do either well you need imagination, an artistic eye — and discipline.

But there seems to be a widening gap between the general public’s perception of these two occupations. Cooking — and what may be termed its end result, eating — now enjoys a very high profile. Just look at the cooking columns, or restaurant reviews, in any newspaper, and you will see what I mean. It’s all gone terribly up-market; some may think a trifle pretentious. The same applies to wine, which has a more obvious affinity with food. Wine critics have developed a rather curious, esoteric idiom of their own; they find overtones of raspberry, citrus and just about everything except grape in what they are drinking. I have just read of a wine that is said to have an aroma akin to that of a solicitor’s waiting room, which should be sufficient reason for not drawing the cork.

Pretentious or not, I’m sure it’s done a world of good to the catering and wine industries.

Gardening, on the other hand, retains what English gardening writer Christine Walkden calls its “Cloth Cap and Clogs” image (I’m sure there is an Australian equivalent to this). It’s all, literally, down to earth, grovelling in it, in fact. Which admittedly much of it is, but I suggest there is more to gardening than growing pretty flowers, having a manicured front lawn, or producing the world’s biggest tomato.

Don Burke, speaking as guest of honour at our tenth birthday party last November, recalled how, when he and I worked together briefly at a certain garden centre in Sydney, we both had “crazy dreams”, he to have his own TV program, I to publish a magazine; how we pursued our own “avenues of madness”, he to popularise gardening to the masses, I to elevate it and expand the horizon. These were fullsome words, but I like to think that this journal has expanded the horizon for many Australian gardeners.

The need to do this has never been greater; not just in the direction of a more aesthetic appreciation of gardens; not necessarily in the way that food and wine have been elevated; but also in a more pragmatic way.

Gardening now has an important role to play in sustaining the viability of the environment in which we live. We should now be stopping to think whether we can go on wasting precious resources, like water and fossil fuel, on unnecessary expanses of greensward; of consigning loads of recyclable waste to the local rubbish tip; of continuing to degrade our urban and suburban land, air and water; and destroying our rainforest plants without even knowing what we are destroying.

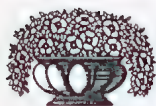
There are a hundred and one problems which gardeners, in a very practical way, can help to solve simply by adopting a sensible and informed attitude towards them.

Unfortunately, the gardening community in this country is hopelessly fragmented. The food world has evolved a tight, three-sided network of food writers, hotel and restaurant owners (and their chefs) and distributors. The wine world is also, publicity-wise, well integrated. In the USA and UK, with their much larger populations, gardening is far more institutionalised than it is here, which means that gardeners are, on the whole, better serviced.

We still have horizons to discover and explore.

**TIM NORTH**





## PROFILES



**TOM CROSSEN** was born and educated in Christchurch, New Zealand, and received his early horticultural training at the Christchurch Botanic Gardens. From there he gained a Diploma in Horticulture at Lincoln College, a National Diploma in Horticulture, and B.Sc (Botany) at the University of Canterbury.

After graduating he travelled extensively overseas, working in Europe and England and gaining a Master's Degree in Park Management. For the past 18 years he has worked in Australia, in education up to 1977, when he was appointed Director of Black Hill Native Flora in South Australia; since 1981 he has been Director of Parks and Recreation for the City of Hobart.

As Deputy President and a Fellow of the Royal Australian Institute of Parks and Recreation he received the Institute's Award for Park Administration and Recreation in 1988.

**DAVID CLODE** enjoys designing wildlife and permaculture gardens as Swallowtail Landscape Design. He has gardened in Australia, Wales and South Africa, and has worked in nurseries and in agriculture as well as landscaping. He has lectured at VCAH Burnley and Garden World Nursery in Melbourne. At Melbourne Zoo he worked on the rainforest areas, including the Gorilla Exhibit. He has a degree in horticulture from VCAH Burnley and a certificate in permaculture design.

Aside from landscape design and consultancy David and his wife are currently developing their four hectare organic farm near Drysdale, Victoria. First and foremost, David is interested in nature, and enjoys gardening, bushwalking and scuba diving. Swallowtail Landscape Design can be contacted on (03)890.2184.

**STEPHEN RYAN** grew up on his father's nursery at Mount Macedon and trained as an apprentice with Oakleigh Technical College on the horticultural campus. At the end of three years he was Dux of the Campus and received two overseas scholarships, one to New Zealand for 12 months and one to England for three months. He was also selected as one of the five finalists for Apprentice of the Year (the first time for a horticultural student).

He is currently President and a Life Member of the Mount Macedon

Horticultural Society and a Regional Councillor of the Royal Horticultural Society of Victoria. He writes a regular article, "Plantsman's Prattle" for that Society's journal. Stephen is a Life Member of the International Dendrology Society and holds the *Cornus*

Collection for the Ornamental Plants Collections Association.

He started his nursery, Dicksonia Rare Plants, at Mount Macedon in 1980; he specialises in unusual plants difficult to obtain through most commercial nurseries.

**KEVIN WALSH** is a professional horticulturist, garden designer and writer. He holds a Bachelor of Arts with a major in writing as well as a Trade Certificate in Horticulture and is currently completing the Graduate Diploma in Applied Science (Horticulture) at VCAH Burnley.

His work experience has been broad and covers most aspects of horticulture at a professional level. He has worked at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne, and oversaw the rejuvenation of the historic Malmesbury Botanic Gardens. He is a regular contributor of gardening articles to various newspapers, magazines and journals. However he is probably best known for his writings on the gardening page of "The Age" where, as well as writing feature articles, he has a "Readers' Questions" column.

Since 1985 Kevin has lived in Castlemaine where he bases his busy garden design and consultancy practice. This has involved him in a diverse range of projects including designs for commercial, public and private spaces, reports for local government and consultation for schools, horticultural enterprises, historic gardens and private individuals.

**PAMELA POLGLASE** is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Horticulture and author, co-author, editor, or illustrator of a number of books on gardening, including "Glorious Gardening in Pots" (Murdoch Books, 1988), "A-Z of Vegetable Gardening in Australia" (Ellsyd Press, 1986) and "Climbing Plants for Australian Gardens" (Methuen, 1987). She is a regular contributor to "Australian Horticulture", but what appeals to her particularly is opening her garden, in the northern Sydney suburb of Elanora Heights, to the public in early summer and again in autumn. The proceeds from these openings benefit Katandra Sanctuary, the subject of her article in this issue.

**CAROL McCORMACK** is an artist living with her family on a cattle grazing property in the same district as Myall Park. She came to know the Gordons through her friendship with Dave's wife, Dorothy, in the local art group and it is only since her death in 1985 that Carol has become involved with Dave's work in the garden. She is currently correspondence secretary of Myall Park Botanic Garden Ltd.



# *In A Desert Garden*

*Bruce KNIGHT describes the natural beauty of the arid Red Centre.*



I really do think that Ross River Homestead should be given an award for garden design. I am not referring to the stand of huge Tamarix which shelter and shade the main buildings, or even to the bed of daffodils beside the front gate, but to the 24 square miles of botanic and scenic delights on the other side of the white picket fence — Mother Nature as gardener.

Situated 80 km north-east of Alice Springs, the Homestead was annexed from Garden and Love Creek Stations in 1958 for the purpose of running tourists rather than cattle. It encompasses quartzite ridges of the East MacDonnell Ranges, interspersed by small plains, the beds and flood-outs of the Ross River and its tributaries.

The original Love Creek homestead of slab rock and local mortar

dates from 1898. With some additions it now forms the bar, dining rooms and office of the present complex. A few remnants of other structures in stone or packed earth remain, now surrounded by basic but comfortable slab huts to accommodate visitors. There is some thought of developing the surrounding gardens using plants typical of the old homesteads of the Centre — an interesting exercise in



garden history if it is undertaken properly. However, the major attractions at present lie where the hand of man is barely evident.

I needed a break from the pleasures and pressures of work, from my nursery and my garden. My vision was becoming too myopic, too civilized and the Outback, the deserts, were a remedy I'd used before. In my early years of travelling I would, before departure, check on main flowering seasons, prior rainfall, vegetation maps, etc, usually managing to arrive too early or too late for the envisaged bonanza of bloom. Now I take the desert as it comes, just pack up and go. Freed of expectations I always find a wealth of interest; a solitary Abutilon, green and gold, in a scorched gully; scarlet Mistletoe on a dying Acacia; dragon lizards skittering over bare baked stones; the rare haze of foliage and delicate flowers following good rains.

Perhaps it is something to do with the light, for the world seems very clear cut out here. Each plant, stone, butterfly or bird stands forth as an individual whose identity you can grasp without referring to a text book. Yet all fuse into an undeniable

wholeness. Perhaps it is an unambiguous statement of the interconnectedness of life and mortality which refreshes by its honesty — no intimations here, just bleached bones, tiny green buds hiding at the base of a tangle of dead branches, seeds lying in the dust.

I had only one week to spare and I did not wish to waste it on "getting there", scenic tours or setting up and keeping camp. I did not want to be distracted or challenged by the achievements of other mortal gardeners, or lured into collecting cuttings or visiting nurseries. I wanted to roam or gaze or dream without schedule, creature comforts provided. Some place I could walk out the door and be there.

Having given up trying to tempt me with Bali and Club Med, my travel agent sighed that if that was really the sort of holiday I wanted then Ross River Homestead sounded as though

it would fill the bill. It did; creature comforts as required; walking trails with no labels on the scenery; horses or camels if you wanted a change from foot slogging; no organized-for-all entertainment but good company when you sought it — and miles and miles of desert!

A cynical acquaintance once remarked that this "mystique" of the arid lands which I tend to promulgate was nothing more than "cerebral anaesthesia brought on by miles and miles of nothingness". A jibe that was amusing when made over coffee and an after dinner mint, rather sad when all too often heard from visitors in the outback. "Some of the scenery is

*continued on page 115*

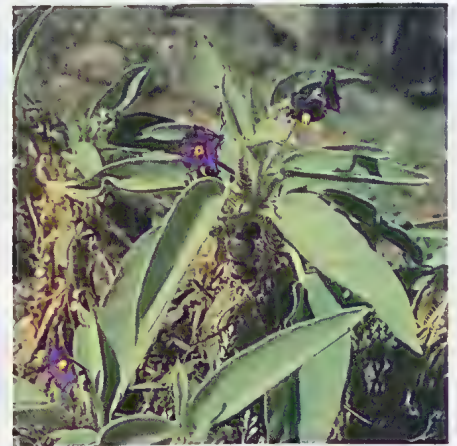
(opposite page) Ross River homestead

(below left) Emu Bush (*Eromophila christophii*)

(below right) River Red Gum and Community Wattle.

(right) *Solanum quadriloculatum*

photos B. Knight







# *Myall Park Botanic Garden*

*by Carol McCORMACK*



*Most of Australia's botanic gardens are situated on the coastal fringe, but Myall Park is an exception. Officially recognized as a Botanic Garden in 1984 it is one of the few collections to be found in the semi-arid zone of the continent. It specialises in Australian flora from arid, semi-arid and sub-tropical regions and is established in natural bushland near the small town of Glenmorgan, on the western edge of Queensland's Darling Downs.*



The garden represents the life work of Mr David Gordon, AM, who began this outstanding project on his grazing property, Myall Park, in 1941. Dave, now in his nineties, inherited his love of Australian flora from his father, whom he remembers helping to plant native trees in central Victoria before the family moved to Queensland in 1910 (this of course was at a time when most farmers considered natural vegetation their enemy). As he developed the Myall Park property, Dave began his garden, not formal in any sense but an area which was to blend with its surroundings. It has gradually grown and today covers some 90 hectares, accessed by a network of driving tracks. Days can be spent in getting to know the layout and, for the layman at least, years in recognising the many thousands of plants.

Genera established at Myall Park include grevilleas, banksias, acacias (many from remote areas and rarely seen), magnificent angophoras which are native to the area, hakeas, melaleucas and numerous superb species of eucalypts. Many species happily growing in the garden are now extremely rare and in some



cases extinct in their natural habitat. The great majority of plants have been grown from seed and cuttings gathered from all over Australia in the 1950s by Dave, his family and employees, and propagated in the nursery at Myall Park.

Dave has been meticulous in keeping records over the years. An extensive herbarium of some 7,000 specimens provides a back-up on information on almost every plant collected for the garden. Currently ➡

(opposite page top) View of the lake below the ridge on which the garden sits.

(opposite page bottom) David Gordon at Myall Park.

(above) *Eucalyptus youngii*

(below left) *Grevillea* 'Sandra Gordon'

(below) *Grevillea* 'Robyn Gordon'





the herbarium is being restored by members of the local community and wherever possible duplicated specimens are being sent to the Queensland Government Herbarium to supplement their own collection.

The genus *Grevillea* has long been one of Dave Gordon's favourites. Many years ago he planted a section of the garden with several different species in the hope of achieving spontaneous hybrids. This move paid off and gardeners all over Australia are now well acquainted with the *Grevilleas* 'Robyn Gordon', 'Sandra Gordon' and to a lesser degree 'Merinda Gordon', all named by Dave and his wife Dorothy after their three daughters. Robyn Gordon died at the age of 16 after a long illness, shortly after her father had given her name to his first hybrid. In 1973 *Grevillea* 'Robyn Gordon' became the first plant to be registered by the newly established Australian Cultivar Registration Authority and the procedure taken to bring this about became the recognised precedent for all subsequent registrations. ➤

*Grevillea* 'Robyn Gordon' has become one of the most popular native plants in Australia, and is grown in all States. It is a compact, semi-prostrate shrub with large red flowers all year round that are very attractive to nectar-eating birds. It thrives in a wide range of climates and soil types, can be pruned to suit any position, and is one of the all-time best sellers for Australian nurserymen. Dave's future plans include looking into grafting "difficult" species of *Grevillea* with very specialised cultivation requirements onto the stock of *Grevillea robusta* (Silky Oak) which grows well in most situations.

Unfortunately, Plant Variety Rights came to Australian legislation too late to enable the Gordons to derive any income from the millions of retail nursery sales of Myall Park's hybrid grevilleas — a great pity, as funds are a perennial problem and the lack of same hampers development of the garden.

Dave is still the manager, planner and inspiration of the garden.

Fortunately, he enjoys good health and still commands an encyclopaedic knowledge of the names of his plants and their origins; his memory frequently amazes his helpers, as does his stamina as he marches around the garden inspecting labels, checking out the best blooms for visitors, supervising plantings, watering, and making plans.

Dave's achievements in the field of horticulture are many, and the scientific importance of Myall Park Botanic Garden is recognised by experts all over the world; it receives several mentions in the Royal Australian Institute of Parks and Recreation report on "The Collection of Native Plants in Australian Botanic Gardens and Arboreta" (1984). Dave Gordon was one of the first to be awarded Honorary Life Membership of the Society for Growing Australian Plants and was appointed a Member in the General Division of the Order of Australia (AM) in 1987 for his services to horticulture and conservation in the area of Australian native flora. Dave travelled to the Botanic Gardens Conservation Congress held on Reunion Island in the Indian Ocean in 1989. Later that year he received a "Greening Australia" award for individual effort. Recently the Australian Heritage Commission recognised Dave by placing Myall Park on the National Estate Register.

In 1988 Mr Grenville Lucas, Keeper of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, crossed the flooded Coridamine River in a rowing boat to keep an appointment at Myall Park Botanic Garden (and cancelled a later engagement to enable him to prolong his stay!). Mr Lucas was most impressed and insisted that moves be made to preserve and continue David Gordon's work. In response to this a committee of local enthusiasts and family members was formed to address the issue. Recently a non-profit company has taken the place of the committee, and Dave works closely with his co-directors who are taking increasing responsibility for administration, maintenance and further development.

Visiting Myall Park is a wonderful experience; the house and its surrounding buildings (nursery, sheds and cottages) are set on an imposing ridge above a long lagoon rich in bird life. The rambling garden around the buildings is planted with many of Dave's favourites and continues almost imperceptibly into the garden proper. The ridge provides an ideal site for the plants he chose; it is high enough above the surrounding area to escape the worst frosts and its soil structure makes for excellent drainage and deep root runs. Rainfall averages about 575 mm annually with low humidity and frequent long dry spells.

In springtime the garden is glorious; the senses are almost overwhelmed by the richness of colour and diversity of form of some of nature's most intriguing plants, while birdsong and the scent of blossom fill the air. Since the committee came into being Open Days have been held for the general public on several different occasions in spring and these have been very popular. Volunteer guides help Dave Gordon to show visitors the most outstanding features of the moment. Throughout the year Dave welcomes friends who come to see his garden, including botanists and curators of other gardens, conservationists, bird watchers, photographers and artists; many return again and again to renew the Myall Park sensation.

Australian natives have something special to offer all year round; at Christmas time the colours of the tree trunks are a picture, shedding barks expose oranges, pinks, greens, purples, yellows and reds. Easter is best known as water lily time; dams and lagoons on the property boast at least six different varieties of *Nymphaea gigantea* in a range of blues, pinks white and mauves. As for autumn and winter, seed pods of all colours and shapes make Myall Park truly a garden for all seasons.

Dave's wife Dorothy, a well known watercolourist, painted a series of her favourite wildflowers now collected into a delightful book



with text written by Dave and Jean Harslett, Dorothy's sister. The book was prepared for publication by members of the local Meandarra Branch of the Queensland Arts Council with financial assistance from the Bicentennial Authority. "Australian Wildflower Paintings" was launched in 1988 and is still selling well, a fitting memorial to Dorothy, who was tragically killed in a car accident in 1985. Her original paintings were exhibited by the Queensland Arts Council in the Queensland Pavilion at the Garden Expo in Osaka, Japan, in 1989 and subsequently formed the inaugural exhibition at the Queensland Arts Council's new Brisbane gallery.

In September last year the company launched a "Friends" Association; annual membership dues will boost funds and so far many practical offers of assistance have been received; these cover a range of areas such as help with Open Days, making grant applications and computer assistance with newsletter layouts. Benefits offered in return for membership include a regular newsletter covering current

happenings in the garden, Open Day dates and other items of interest. It is hoped that much support will be received from nursery people and from the gardening public as the Friends's existence becomes known.

Except on Open Days, visits to Myall Park Botanic Garden are by appointment only. Some camping is

permitted by arrangement, a cottage in the grounds is available to rent at reasonable rates, and motel accommodation is available in nearby Glenmorgan.

*Note: The author wishes to thank many Friends of Myall Park for assistance given in the preparation of this article.*

## Friends of Myall Park Botanic Gardens:

### *Subscriptions for 1991-92*

Individual .....	\$15
Household .....	\$25
Senior/Pensioner .....	\$ 8
Community Groups .....	\$30
Retail Nurseries .....	\$40
Corporations .....	\$50
Life Membership .....	\$250

*For further information telephone Nita Lester (076) 32 9540  
or after hours Joan Schwennessen (076) 26 5303.*

*Application for membership together with subscription can be sent to:  
The Executive Officer, Friends of Myall Park Garden,  
Post Office Glenmorgan, Qld 4423.*

## *In A Desert Garden, continued from page 111*

fantastic but you've got to travel through all this boring sameness between the good spots". If only they would stop, get out, walk — and look. The variation in vegetation with each change of terrain, rock type, aspect, is amazing. This hillock sports Cassia, the next one, a little higher and steeper, a crown of Acacia with mallee gums for a skirt; this rocky northern slope, blue flowering Emu Bush with spiky cushions of spinifex below the red cliffs. In a four km walk from the homestead to The Sphinx (a scenic rock outcrop) I must have passed through at least ten distinct communities, each producing at least one superb example of the Master Landscaper's craft; blends and contrasts of foliage, texture and

form, juxtaposition of plant and stone; tree and vista.

Perfume, too, is part of the desert magic. Perfumes wafted briefly on the air when Wild Stock, Cassia, Acacia or the evening scented Nicotianas bloom. More common are scents hidden away until leaf or twig is brushed or broken — the native Lemon Grasses; white Mint Bush in rocky gullies; yellow flowering Wedelia; Stemodia with its fragrance of minted fruit salad; Pterocaulon smelling of apple crumble.

My horticulturist's acquisitiveness was minimal — few if any of these plants would thrive in my well watered coastal garden.

I could admire without envy — even with limitless time and money I could not hope to compete with a display such as this.

I was refreshed, realizing anew the real reasons I enjoy gardening so much.

But to get back to reasons for that award for design excellence — the fragile delicacy of a single blue daisy against cracked terracotta clay; the bright green of Caper Bush against the dark fissured trunks of Beefwood; the scolding of a Bowerbird, secreted in a native Fig bonsaied against burnished rock; a single weeping Ironwood breaking the uniformity of a roly-poly plain; the silver of Indigofera on black stony hills — the pen is inadequate, the camera equally so. But hopefully between the two I can convey a little of what I saw, a little of what I felt.



# Some Australian Rainforest Plants for the Garden

*Nan NICHOLSON, of Terania Rainforest Nursery in northern New South Wales, describes five plants which are easy to grow in a wide range of climates (provided the basics of water and fertilizer are applied), are fairly readily available from native plant nurseries and which represent a range in sizes from ground level to 30 metres.*

## Shatterwood

*Backhousia sciadophora* (Myrtaceae)

Some early settlers named this tree Shatterwood for its excellent splitting qualities, others named it Ironwood for the difficulty with which it is chopped. This is a densely crowned, small tree of 10 to 15 m though some old specimens of 30 m have been found. It often grows in pure stands in the poorer, drier rainforests, usually in steep and rocky places, from Dungog on the mid-north coast of NSW to Imbil, 150 km north of Brisbane. Flowering usually occurs in winter when little else is in bloom; prolific crops such as this can cover the whole canopy of the tree. The glossy, rounded leaves have numerous oil dots that provide a spicy or eucalyptus scent; young leaves are red and mirror-shiny.

In the garden Shatterwood is a very attractive and easily grown tree, though rarely seen in cultivation. It tolerates cool climates, poorer soils and dry conditions though it responds quickly to water, mulch and nutrients. Cuttings are difficult to strike but the tiny seed which is released from the capsules germinates fairly reliably. Seedlings often lie over and should be tip-pinned to encourage bushy upright growth.

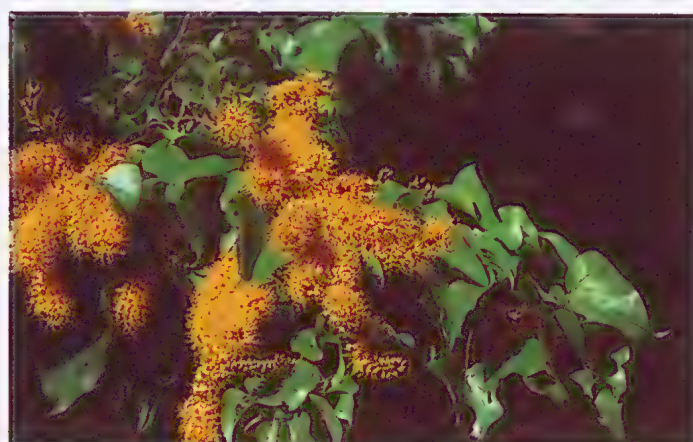


## Barklya

*Barklya syringifolia* (Caesalpinaceae)

Also known, most appropriately, as the Crown of Gold Tree, this magnificent plant once occurred as a canopy tree up to 20 m in the drier rainforests from Brisbane to Mackay. It is now mostly seen as a dense shrub of 5 to 7 m under cultivation. The golden flowers cover the outer branches in early summer. For the rest of the year its shiny, heart-shaped leaves make it an attractive evergreen shrub.

In the garden it is one of the most spectacular of the rainforest trees, often flowering when only 2 m high. It deserves greater popularity, especially as it can cope with cooler latitudes than its natural habitat. Though very slow at first even in good conditions with well drained humus-rich soil and plenty of moisture it is definitely worth persevering with. Growth can be encouraged by regular fertilizing and heavy mulching. It can tolerate full sun and is not affected by light frost but this will retard growth. When grown from scarified seed it may take ten years to flower. For this reason cuttings or air-layered plants are preferable.





### Francis' Water Gum

*Syzygium francisii* (Myrtaceae)

Mature specimens are amongst the most majestic of the rainforest canopy trees, reaching over 40 m with massive buttressed trunks. Regrowth trees are commonly seen along watercourses where they are 10 to 15 m with a very compact outline. Their dark shiny foliage is often further darkened by infestations of black scale which surprisingly does not detract from the appearance, but emphasises the new growth colours. Small white flowers precede these lovely fruits, produced in prodigious amounts. Though edible, their texture resembles a very floury apple. The tree occurs in subtropical rainforest on red or brown volcanic soils from the mid-north coast of NSW to the lower central coast of Queensland.

In the garden, although usually grown in parks or on farms, this is an outstanding plant even for small gardens where it can be pruned to keep the bright, dense foliage low and visible. Young leaves are brilliant red or pink and make this a superb container plant. Full sun and light frost are tolerated. Peeled seed germinates in 2 to 3 weeks.



### Little Kurrajong

*Brachychiton bidwillii* (Sterculiaceae)

Bright clusters of these appealing flowers, each 4 to 5 cm across, appear just before the new leaves. Both flowers and leaves, especially the new shoots, are softly hairy. The leaves are dropped before flowering to reduce stress in its relatively dry habitat. Prolonged wet may induce flowering in full foliage. The plant is found on rocky slopes and around cliffs in the dry vine scrubs and simpler rainforests of south east Queensland. It adapts well to drought; in fact most of the *Brachychiton* species in Australia belong to seasonally dry subcoastal zones. It is an open shrub, seldom over 5 m tall.

In the garden this very beautiful plant is not common, although it has apparently been grown in southern USA for several decades. It flowers at an early age and often while less than 50 cm in height. It requires warmth and well drained soil but adapts quite well to wetter and cooler conditions. The seeds can be prised from the boat-shaped follicle and will germinate after several weeks.



### Giant Moss

*Dawsonia superba* (Dawsoniaceae)

The species name "*superba*" means magnificent, an unlikely name for a moss, but at anything from 10 to 50 cm this is one of the biggest mosses found anywhere in the world. Like a forest of tiny pine trees it forms extensive colonies in shady, moist places, often in heavy clay soils of low fertility such as road cuttings. In such sites it flourishes right along the east coast of mainland Australia, Tasmania and New Zealand. At certain times of the year it appears more blue than green.

In the garden *Dawsonia* is not often seen in cultivation but is easy to grow with minimal attention in shade. It does not require either fertilizer or well drained soil, but water is always appreciated and cannot be overdone. During dry periods it will wilt severely but recovers quickly with watering. The long underground stems, which can tap hidden moisture also make it difficult to transplant. If grown in shallow trays of clay soil it can be easily divided.



photos Alex Hansa and Hugh Nicholson

*Note: For more information on Australian rainforest plants suitable for the garden, Nan and Hugh Nicholson's three books, "Australian Rainforest Plants", I, II and III, are available from Terania Rainforest Nursery, Terania Creek Road, The Channon, NSW 2480.*



# Biotic Diversity Among the Aliens

Kay OVERELL pitches into the sea grass.

**B**enjamin Isaacs wrote in the October/November journal about the use of seaweed in the garden. In his scholarly article he mentioned that when the Roaring Forties blow into Bass Straight the best seaweed for the garden is deposited on the beaches of King Island. When the same westerlies blow across Narrabeen Lake they also pile sea grasses on the shore in the park outside my garden. From my side of the fence I admire the growing mounds of weed with naked greed. Then I get my big wheelbarrow and garden fork and I'm out there.

Simpering New Age air-heads who've come to the lake to commune with the ether watch me pitching the smelly sea grass into the industrial strength wheelbarrow.

"Is this a neighbourhood clean-up?" they ask earnestly.

"Yes", I reply, "we're getting rid of toxic waste."

Then I rumble off with my full barrow while curtains in the street begin twitching as I pass.


This year has been a big one for barrowing sea grass and twitching curtains. Those screaming westerlies that blew for so many weeks in August and September gave up almost 50 industrial strength loads of mulch for my garden.

Barrowing the sea grass to use on the garden has been one of my chores for several years. In the beginning I used it because it was there; it was free; and most importantly it was weed seed free. I didn't know algae on the garden could "unlock soil-bound nutrients" or "create biotic diversity". But it wasn't long after I began using it that I noticed how active and beautifully textured the soil was beneath the mulch. Although if I understand Benjamin Isaacs correctly, in the alginic acid ratings my sea grass is probably fairly wimpish in comparison to King Island's super strength *Durvillaea potatorum*. Still, the sea grass, wimpish or not, is the best mulch I've ever used, not even the lovely maple leaf mulch that I scrounge from one of the curtain twitchers creates the same frenetic soil activity. Pull back the grass mulch to reveal the earth and amazing numbers of little creatures run for cover, this is what I am assuming is what Benjamin Isaacs means when he talks of "biotic diversity". Also it is probably worth mentioning that the level of soil activity is in direct proportion to the thickness of the mulch. Those little soil creatures seem to like living in deep cover.

The absolute best grade A mulch I barrow in from the park is a mixture of the fallen *Erythrina* leaves which blow on the shore in June to combine finally in August with the mounting banks of sea grass. This, for plants, must be our equivalent of living on ripe avocados and fresh asparagus.

But there is a price for everything and I'm not being paranoid when I tell you that my neighbourhood barrowing is building me a reputation. "Mother Nature" is the sarcastic nickname the Narrabeen "boyz" (one good nickname deserves another) give to any woman who wants more than a couch-infested 18 inch wide garden bed of starving plants. And while chatting about conformist attitudes can you imagine the comments that my petite meadow of impatiens provokes after the "boyz" have had a few cold ones? Sometimes in this place I feel I'm living among aliens. But to paraphrase one of this century's all-time celluloid "boyz" — a girl has to do what a girl has to do. Creating topsoil is a noble endeavour. It is also a necessary one when you're gardening on what amounts to nothing more than ground-up quartz. Those other aliens, the New Agers, might put their faith in quartz crystal, but my plants don't. They want humus, humus and more humus, and forget the crystal.

How I envy the King Islanders, now I know their seaweed makes a super strength polymer mulch. Imagine having the best super strength polymer mulch in all the world washing up on your local beach.

But I have to tell you that I'm ambivalent about seaweed becoming a gardening buzz word. Mostly I'm worrying that I'll have to start sharing the lake's bounty. My garden needs such a lot of it. But maybe as usual I'm worrying about nothing. I mean the New Agers are too busy communing with the ether to be barrowing piles of stinking seaweed, and the Narrabeen "boyz" would be in for too much of a roasting in the public bar on Friday night if their wives fell into the category of "Mother Nature". Still, I've decided to cast a little further afield just in case. Tonight on the weather report there was mention of weed in the water at Newport Beach and Collaroy. So in the morning if the swell is up I'll check Collaroy. Now I have biotic diversity I intend to keep it,  alien ridicule or not.



## LETTERS



Dear Mr North,

The purpose of this letter is to draw attention to a little township (population 500) in the western foothills of the Snowy Mountains called Khancoban. I had no idea of its existence until two years ago and I visited it for the first time only in November last year. I was "knocked out" by its charm.

Created by the Snowy Mountain Authority, Khancoban was established in 1960 and, unlike most Australian towns, did not develop along one main strip but was planned. It was blessed with an abundance of fine trees, thanks, it would appear, to the encouragement of Lady Hudson, wife of the SMA's first Commissioner, Sir William Hudson. Apparently each person moving into a new house was given 20 trees to plant. After 30 years some of these exotics, *Quercus* for example, were bigger than the houses and have had to be removed.

Not only are the streets lined with birches, hawthorns, oaks, elms, etc, but residential streets are unusually planted with different varieties of fruit trees — apple, pear, plum, quince, etc. These have been regularly pruned, sprayed and maintained by the SMA, who have also maintained the rest of the public spaces. Khancoban appears to be situated in the middle of a park! Also, magnificent oaks line either side of the main approach road into the town, a foretaste of what is to come when you arrive at the town. Khancoban also boasts an enormous Rose Garden, with magnificent specimens of old varieties.

The town is magic, nestling as it does on a plateau at the foot of the mountains by Lake Khancoban. But today it is doomed.

As an economy measure, the SMA has decided to hand over the town to the local Shire, who doesn't really want it. It originally had a population of 7,000 with marvellous public facilities, but now only 500 people live there and the Shire cannot afford to maintain such facilities for a small number of people.

In consequence, many trees requiring maintenance will be ripped out (all fruit trees) and the wonderful Rose Garden will be bulldozed. No more lawn mowing, either. There is a small garden club but not enough volunteers to keep the areas maintained, most of the residents being SMA employees in rented accommodation.

I understand the economic problems confronting authorities when it comes to expenditure on aesthetics, but it does seem tragic that this pretty little town should be so vandalised.

Perhaps a little publicity may reinvigorate the town. More visitors could keep it alive, and Khancoban is a

wonderful base for touring the Snowys and the Upper Murray Valley. If tourism brought more prosperity to the area, the Shire might be more inclined to spend ratepayers' money on maintaining the gardens.

In any event, I think the history of the place, unique as it is, is a fascinating tale worth telling.

Yours sincerely,  
Patricia Copes,  
Neutral Bay, NSW.

Dear Sir,

While respecting the opinion of Mary Grant (Letters to the Editor, Dec/Feb) about the Botanic Gardens/Advertiser Open Garden Scheme in South Australia, many hundreds of delighted visitors to gardens in the scheme would disagree with her. The scheme, now six years old, has reached a stage of consolidation, but is as successful as ever.

The remarkable feature of the scheme is that it is entirely voluntary with sponsorship from "The Advertiser" and co-ordination by the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide. Garden owners throughout the State who enjoy giving pleasure to appreciative visitors are welcome as participants and should contact me on (08)228.2320.

Yours faithfully,  
Brian Morley,  
Director, The Botanic Gardens of Adelaide and State Herbarium.

Dear Sir,

Cottage, meadow, woodland and rain forest — what weedy words to describe modern gardens. Words open to varying interpretations with subjective preferences and experiences, used with an all-knowing certainty that further down grades the making of new gardens.

People make gardens; imitating the natural environment is difficult if not impossible to achieve on a suburban plot or small rural site. Viewing large areas of native plants no more than a metre high in Western Australia is a marvellous sight, as is the rather sparsely scattered trees in the Flinders Ranges or the tall redwood forests of California. Where is the need to apply the same terms to both these natural vegetative areas and artificially composed gardens when both are attractive but in different ways?

*continued on page 121*



# Katandra Bushland Sanctuary

*Pamela POLGLASE describes a bushland sanctuary on the way to Palm Beach, north of Sydney.*



*The late Harold Seymour outside the Yurt at Katandra.*

*photo by P. Polglase*

**K**atandra, meaning song of birds, is just up the hill from Mona Vale, but many people are surprised to find something so precious tucked away behind the trees.

The entrance, on Lane Cove Road at Foley's Hill, is on high ground that has been cleared to make room for a small picnic area and a timber yurt where the Trustees hold meetings in comfort unknown in earlier days.

There are 30 acres of undisturbed bushland threaded with well drained, quick drying paths that start among the heathland wildflowers, then wind down into cool rainforest where ferns overhanging the creeks are shaded by tall trees and lianas.

In 1967 Harold Seymour gave the land to the Crown, to be administered by the New South Wales Department of Lands as a special reserve dedicated to "the promotion of the study of, and the preservation of native flora and fauna". Harold Seymour died in 1987 on the eve of his 94th birthday, but took a keen interest in the sanctuary to the last.

Katandra is now cared for by a Trust made up of seven members who, with the help of some volunteers, spend one day a month repairing paths and bridges and pulling out the ever returning weeds that are washed in along the creeks. Unlike some native reserves, nothing is ever planted because the aim is to keep everything as natural as possible so that generations to come will be able to see what the Sydney bushland was like when Captain Cook sailed past all those years ago.

In 1979 most of the sanctuary was erased by bushfire and so were the resident lyrebirds. Some plant species recovered quickly but others took longer, and this is the first year that the lyrebirds have been seen again, though now that foxes are on the increase in the suburbs they are probably doomed.

Katandra Bushland Sanctuary is open every Sunday during July, August, September and October from 10 am to 4 pm and on the third Sunday of the month during March, April, May and June.

In late winter and spring there are plenty of wildflowers, including seven species of *Boronia*, to see, but you will always hear the song of the birds.

The entrance fee is by donation of \$1 but arrangements can be made for special groups at \$2 each or a minimum of \$20, whichever is the greater.

Annual subscription to the Katandra Bushland Club (Friends of the Sanctuary) is \$6 for single membership or \$10 for a family. The address is PO Box 365, Mona Vale, NSW 2103. The President of the Trust, Don Seymour, can be contacted for further details on (02)451.4322.





**LETTERS, continued from page 119**

In recent years much has been written and spoken on the creation of rain forests on small areas, whether urban or rural land. Bear in mind that about a dozen different types of rain forests have been described in a recent book and the intergrading of types stressed. If botanically derived terms are tenuous why call a mixed bag of plants out of a natural setting a rain forest?

Why are these words used so frequently? Possibly it is nostalgia or the gardening press anxious to sell more magazines and books, perhaps the smugness (or snobbery) of gardeners, boasting about their "cottage" gardens or rather just a lack of creativity on the part of writers on garden subjects.

My garden includes a bulb garden, eucalypt garden, tree garden, mixed shrub/tree garden, i.e. whatever I have chosen or will chose to make the total scene. These mini, or better still sub-gardens (after all we talk of sub-species)

can be described further with words such as tropical, perennial or annual. The recent article on urban woodland gardens to my mind would better be described as an article on temperate shrub and tree gardens for small scale sites.

Nowadays a major part of the world flora is available to chose from for horticultural purposes and modern materials can be bought for garden construction that were unheard of even a few years ago, let alone when the terms cottage and woodland came into use.

The modern garden does present a challenge for greater accuracy of description but complacency by using old, inadequate and weary words certainly does not seem to be the best solution.

Yours sincerely,  
Geoff Simmons,  
Elimbah, Qld.



***Our Tenth Birthday Party***

*Don Burke was guest of honour at our birthday party,  
at 'Yarrabin', Bowral, last November.*

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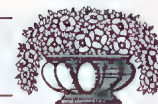
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## BOOK REVIEWS



### ***Eccentric Gardens***

by Jane Owen, published by Pavilion Books, London, 1990;  
recommended retail price \$45.00

### ***The American Man's Garden***

by Rosemary Verey, published by Bullfinch Press, Boston, 1990;  
recommended retail price \$75.00  
reviewed by Trevor Nottle

Choosing books these days is hard work as there so many titles available. Lovely pictures and perhaps a famous name make the first appeal, then a quick scan of the text will hint whether there is worthwhile reading or not. But I find all too often that books don't live up to my expectations; I like pretty pictures and I like many well known authors, and I certainly appreciate the bookishness of books, but I also like books to spark off ideas. I get too many misfires, too many that are just duds.

I confess that I bought *Eccentric Gardens* because I wanted to have at hand the story behind the gardens at Hough Hole House at Rainbow in Cheshire. This is an allegorical garden that illustrates "The Pilgrim's Progress", parts of "Uncles Tom's Cabin" and some of Emanuel Swedenborg's religio-mystic philosophies. It also manages to be a rather pleasant garden and as a category of garden design it is something of a rarity. It seems to work together quite neatly, which is more than can be said of many of the other gardens described here. Most are discomfiting, hard and somewhat contrived. A few, such as the garden of plastic flowers, rubber ducks and plaster of Paris dogs made by Clifford Davis, and a garden populated with "naive" cement figures made by John Fairmington senior, have an infectious enthusiasm and original whimsicality that render their eccentricity charming and homely. I am glad to have the book but I could have done without the forced Indo-Mexican novelty of Zandra Rhodes' London garden, the extravagant follies of Faringdon House in Oxfordshire, and the "tricksy" garden of curious objects made for Lord Snowdon.

*The American Man's Garden* is a different matter altogether, for it strikes me

as the last gasp of a good idea now worn out. When *The English Woman's Garden* first appeared it presented a survey of the new garden ideas that had developed since World War II; post-Sissinghurst gardening if you like. Although in many cases the links to Vita Sackville West and Gertrude Jekyll were obvious there was evidence of much creative thinking, both in the use of form and colour and in gardening in ways that suited modern lifestyles. The last of this genre, the book now under review, is altogether less remarkable. It is a lovely book, lavishly and beautifully illustrated but as a record of new gardening ideas it says more about gardens as a metaphor for wealth than it does about gardening as an expression of creativity. Naturally enough the gardens are loved and lovely, so the book exerts a powerful sentimental influence. There are gardens we can relate to and feel comfortable with; after all, we have seen them before — in England. But when we read that in order to maintain his "English cottage garden" one Memphian waters for eight to ten hours daily to keep it lush and moist we must ask whether or not the gardener is in tune with his environment; whether he is interested in fashion or creativity. There are some gardens in this book whose makers are plainly in tune with their surroundings. The best example, saved for the last entry, is the desert garden of Cliff Douglas in Arizona. Others with sensitivity to their surroundings are those of Marshal Olbrich in California, Marco Polo Stufano in New York City, Benjamin Bladwin in Florida and those made by Frank Cabot at Cold Springs, New York.

In many ways a "nice" book, handsome and beautifully illustrated, but is it necessary reading?

### ***Your Garden Design Book***

by John Brookes; published by Lothian Books, 1991;  
recommended retail price \$65.00  
reviewed by John Patrick

I make no bones about my admiration for John Brookes. Through my years as a student his influence was enormous.

His ideas have developed through the last 20 years while remaining true to his basic design philosophy. I would suggest that there is no young designer working today who has not been influenced by Brookes. His style incorporates the best of the European ecological design philosophy on a formal structure and has clearly had a significant role in the establishment of the new North American style.

One of Brookes' successes has been taking his design philosophy to an enormously wide public through his books, but more successfully through his lectures. These have been especially focussed within his five-week design courses, now based at Kew Gardens. In this book he has attempted to incorporate these courses in print by means of a concise but excellent text with extensive use of line drawings and photographs.

So the question which must be asked is, to what extent has Brookes' been successful in his efforts?

Certainly he sees this as his magnum opus. The support he has received from his publishers has been outstanding. The photographs are almost without exception excellent and the drawings are clear, well chosen and exemplary in the way they enlarge upon points proffered in the text. My attention is especially drawn to the photograph montages which illustrate points relating to style with particular clarity.

The special quality of Brookes' books has been their practical nature, and this work is no exception. While there are all of the preliminary chapters about history, your needs and your site, it is the sections about design which are outstanding. In the simplest, clearest manner the design process is explained, relating it back to the site, showing how a simple structure may be developed which forms the basis for paving, planting, water, steps, and so on. How I wish these simple design concepts could be grasped by Australian home gardeners to whom a random, constructed garden still seems to be acceptable.





## BOOK REVIEWS



Certainly, ideas by Brookes will not be happily grasped by all. Those who see nature being expressed in gardens in the form of an abandoned wilderness will cringe at Brookes, yet he does speak about nature and the natural garden, but within the context of "design", and that is the critical difference. Furthermore, through his experience John Brookes has synthesised a group of excellent plants in which he has complete confidence as a designer. These are not necessarily plants that might fill everybody's list of favourite pretty flowers, but certainly they are plants of enormous functional value within a design. Their selection is based strongly on form, habit and texture, their flower colour being almost incidental. While a number of these plants may not be obtainable in Australia and others might be criticised as ill-suited or undesirable it is not too difficult to identify alternatives from among plants available in our own nurseries.

Anyone who was fortunate enough to meet John Brookes during the Melbourne Garden Design Conference could not fail to have been impressed by his energy and ability. Sadly, I feel he was rather wasted in his too brief overview of garden history. Here is an opportunity for us to read more of his outstanding philosophy and at a price that offers exceptional value for such a colourful and attractive publication.

### *The Mediterranean Gardener*

by Hugh Latymer; published by Frances Lincoln in conjunction with the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (distributed in Australia by Florilegium Press); recommended retail price \$50.00 reviewed by John Patrick

Gardening in the Mediterranean climate has received very little attention from publishers to date. While there has been a plethora of books about every aspect of gardening, from the gardens of English grandmothers to how to create

tasteful planting schemes, there has been an apparent lack of desire to get to grips with gardens of the warmer parts of the world. A few books have originated from California, a little filters through from South Africa, and there are our own contributions, based strongly on the use of our own flora but little beyond that.

The opportunities that Hugh Latymer identifies in gardening in Mediterranean climates are very extensive and attractive too, and the numerous photographs in the book do give an impression of the effects to be achieved where strong colour and bright light, deep shadow and dramatic form are combined.

The book is brief, covering the spectrum of gardening in the considered climate succinctly and with good and extensive use of colour photographs. As with so many books these days text is kept to a minimum so few ideas are developed to any great extent. This is not to say that there are not many most useful ideas illustrated and worthy of consideration and pursuit, indeed some of the photographs clearly save extended writing.

Indeed it should be said that the greatest number of ideas can be provided in the first few pages of writing and that further writing often only extends these ideas, so a brief and concise book of this type has many merits.

There are four sections to the book; "Mediterranean Gardens", which discusses different types of gardens for consideration by designers, including dry, low maintenance gardens (ideal for the holiday home owning Englishman), water gardens and inevitable patio gardens; "Elements of Design" with consideration of paving, pergolas, container and raised beds, water features and so on; "Plants for Mediterranean Gardens" and "The Three Fundamentals" — watering, soil and shade.

Gardens chosen for illustration are in the traditional mould one might expect and are apparently taken in the gardens of southern France and Italy and some of the Mediterranean islands (Latymer

himself has run a nursery garden on the Island of Mallorca since 1967). Sadly this means there is little to reveal approaches to this climate in California or South Africa where more recent, less traditional work has been centred. Australia gets no coverage but then again how many of our gardens look as though they respond to a Mediterranean climate?

The plant lists provide few surprises. Again there is a traditional bent to plants recommended, though I must say Australian plants get little coverage. Surely a few of the more exciting Australian and Californian plants must have penetrated the market in Europe. Interestingly, the eucalypts are seen as difficult to mix; "many people feel that the distinctive look of eucalypts does not fit well with trees such as the olive, holm oak and Aleppo pine". Note that the only eucalypt illustrated looks to me much more like *Metrosideros excelsa* than *Eucalyptus ficifolia*. Other plants are illustrated without receiving any text reference, which is unusual, especially when *Prunus serrulata* is such a plant. Is it really good for Mediterranean gardens? Not in my experience, it seems to need more moisture.

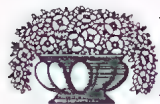
For all these minor criticisms this is a most useful book and readers would do well to purchase it in preference to many another work from the cool temperate world. It is to be hoped that its presence will stimulate further efforts to cover gardens of this climate.

### *Yates Green Guide to Gardening*

by Allen Gilbert; published by Angus and Robertson.  
reviewed by Tim North

This is a useful little book which sets out, in a methodical and easily understood manner, the advantages of organic methods of gardening. It explains what is meant by "organic" gardening, and the different philosophies which fit into this concept, such as biodynamic, permaculture, self-sufficiency and the holistic systems.





## BOOK REVIEWS



While much of the information it contains will not be new to many readers of this journal it is, nonetheless, convenient to have the whole concept of organic gardening summarised in one volume.

### ***Natural Gardening and Farming in Australia***

**by Jeffrey Hodges; published by Viking O'Neil; recommended retail price \$30.00**

**reviewed by John Stowar**

The interest in "growing your own" has had a very chequered career in Australia, from its origins with the First Fleet when survival was the motivation. Large disposable incomes and the ubiquitous quarter acre block resulted in poor respect for land and the opportunities it provides for producing at least some of our own food. However, over the last 20 years or so concern for the quality of the food we eat has resulted in renewed interest, and this revised edition of the book first published in 1989 would be a good introduction to the subject.

This is a very personal approach to gardening, with a strong emphasis on "harvesting the suburbs", but the reader is given a much wider context for the need to do this. Jeff's enthusiasm is unquestionable and many of his ideas, such as "no dig" gardening and using natural ecosystems as models are commendable. However in reading some of the early chapters I could not help detect a naivety. The problem of growing trees — real trees — on a suburban block and avoiding the shading of both your own vegetable and fruit garden and that of your neighbour has been inadequately addressed. With so many of his examples based on his own suburban block it would be of great interest to see its evolution in say ten or even five years. This garden was disturbingly new at the time of writing and plant competition is a vexing question, especially when we are concerned with production!

The chapters on soil nutrients I found particularly informative, especially the

role of mycorrhizal fungi which hold such promise. Valuable also are the ideas presented by the specialist authors on farm stewardship, bio-dynamic growing and small-scale technology, all of which should have wide appeal with the awakening interest in the environmental crises our earth is experiencing.

What I cannot reconcile, however, is the "ultimate goal — a garden in which I don't have to water, weed, fertilise, kill pests, or even sow seeds" with the statement that "gardening is the ultimate art" where "you are a sculptor, a composer and a painter all in one".

As I have said, this is a very personal approach to gardening and land stewardship which makes interesting reading, even if at times one is irritated by some of the approaches.

### ***Elms in Australia***

**by Roger Spencer, John Hawker and Peter Lumley; published by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne and available from the Visitors Centre or Friends' Shop at the Gardens, price \$10.**

**reviewed by Tim North**

The threat of Dutch Elm Disease, which has virtually wiped out the elm population of Europe and England, has quickly focused attention on this Northern Hemisphere tree and its importance to our landscapes and street-scapes. It is estimated that there are approximately 70,000 elms in Victoria alone.

This book, the third in a series on ornamental plants put out by Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens, tackles the problems of identification and classification, problems often inherent in a group of plants that has been cultivated for several thousand years, with keys, drawings of leaves (at half size) and brief descriptions. It also gives advice on propagation, establishment and transplanting, and there is a chapter on pests and diseases, much of which is naturally devoted to Dutch Elm Disease.

A timely and authoritative work.

## **BOOK LIST**

***Cheap and Easy Propagation*, by Jane Edmanson**

***Weed Control for the Home Gardener*, by David Aldous**

**Two more titles in the popular Lothian Australian Garden series; good value at \$12.95.**

***Strawberries*,**

**by Pamela Allardice; Hill of Content Publishing; Covers history and cultivation as well as literary excerpts and recipes for beauty as well as taste.**

***Field Guide to the Native Plants of Sydney*,**

**by Les Robinson; Kangaroo Press.**

***Flora of New South Wales*, Vols 1 and 2; by Gwen Harden; New South Wales University Press; \$79.96 each.**

**The first two volumes in a definitive study of the State's flora. A must for all native plant enthusiasts.**

***What to Plant Where in Brisbane and the Coast*,**

**by Jo Hirschfeld; 2nd edition 1991. A useful book for people moving from the south; complete plant lists plus a chapter on designing gardens.**

**Also for Queensland gardeners, a useful and authoritative series of booklets from the State's Department of Primary Industries, including:**

***Propagating Citrus in Containers*;**

***Growing Zucchini's, Button Squash and Cucumbers*;**

***Growing Beans***

**(available from QDPI Bookshop, 80 Ann Street, Brisbane)**



# Golden Gardens

— a brief history of Castlemaine gardens and gardening

by Kevin Walsh.

Castlemaine, in central Victoria, is a town born of gold. The area had perhaps a handful of inhabitants prior to 1851 when the discovery of gold was announced in the *Argus* newspaper. By December the same year the population had swelled to some 20,000 and in March 1852 it was estimated to be around 25,000.

After the initial rush and proliferation of makeshift accommodation the community settled into the task of establishing permanent residences and services. Elaborate public buildings were constructed and houses ranging from rudimentary weatherboard cottages to the stylish were built. A local council was formed and services established. Along with the more permanent nature of the town came the opportunity for gardens and gardening.

## Seedsmen, Nurseries and Pleasure Gardens

The earliest garden-related advertisement appeared in the local press in May 1854 when A.G. Schulte, a wholesale and retail druggist, announced he had 10,000 packets of fresh garden seeds for sale. It was not uncommon for druggists to sell seeds, not only of garden plants but also for broad acre farming and stock feed. Druggists — in Castlemaine at least — continued to sell seeds well into the 20th century.

But the local druggists were not the only ones advertising their garden wares. Castlemaine was a large enough town for many prominent Melbourne seedsmen, including Law and John Rule, to feel it worthwhile advertising.

Of course, the major suppliers of plants were the local nurserymen. Unlike the modern image of nurseries, the 19th century nurserymen generally operated from market gardens or, in Castlemaine's case, from "pleasure gardens". Between 1857 and 1864 six pleasure gardens have been recorded in the district.

Pleasure gardens served a variety of functions. Principally they were showcase nurseries in which visitors could view a vast range of plants. As well as being ornamental, these gardens were nearly always a combination of orchard, vineyard and market garden in which the produce was available for purchase. Thus most pleasure gardens were only open in fruiting season and as well as selling plants they sold fruit and the products of those fruits, notably wine.

As enticements to new visitors, or to tempt previous visitors to return, the pleasure gardens were continually adding new and more interesting assets. One featured a small lake on which floated a model of the frigate SS Warrior. Another claimed to have the largest stock of plants in Victoria.

Perhaps the most elaborate of the local pleasure gardens was Meredith's Cremorne Gardens at Chewton, just outside Castlemaine. By 1859 these featured a subterranean cavern, grassy lawns, quoit ground and a smoking arbour in the "central branches of a lofty gum tree". What all this looked like will have to be left to the imagination as nothing of note remains of any of the district's pleasure gardens. ➔

### Cremorne Gardens, CHEWTON.

THIS Favorite Summer Retreat will  
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*Entrance to Castlemaine Botanical Gardens c.1880.*

## Private gardens

In the light of the local pleasure gardens and the availability of plants it is not surprising that there was a lot of interest in gardening, and in 1861 the Castlemaine Horticultural Society was formed.

Interest in horticulture is usually exemplified by the creation of gardens, and in 1863 the local paper was happy to report that "within the municipal boundaries of this town there are numerous parterres and miniature gardens artistically and tastefully arranged".

A few of the earlier gardens remain largely intact. The most notable of these is "Buda", a sprawling Victorian cottage garden spread over two hectares. The house and garden are now open on a permanent basis and were featured in an article in this Journal last year.

Other private gardens of note include one featuring beds edged with box, and another with the brick edging and gravel paths of the last century still in place. Around the town can be seen good examples of Federation gardens and inter-war gardens of Californian bungalows.

## Botanical gardens


From very early in the town's history there was a desire to establish a botanical garden. Although an area was reserved in 1860 little of note happened until the appointment of the first curator in 1866. He was Phillip Doran, who had come to Australia in search of gold after having trained with Joseph Paxton at Chatsworth in Derbyshire.

Doran did a remarkable job in turning the mined-out creek flat into an ornamental botanical garden. Over his 47 year curatorship he oversaw the laying out of paths and garden beds, the construction of two ornamental lakes and redirection of the course of the creek, the construction of various garden buildings such as a summerhouse, and the planting of hundreds of trees.

Many of the trees planted in the gardens were donated by the Victorian Government Botanist, Baron von Mueller. Plants also came from other Victorian botanic gardens and also on one occasion from the Sydney Botanic Gardens. Although there is no record of von Mueller ever coming to Castlemaine it is obvious he had a great respect for Doran and his work as in 1874 he named a species of central Australian shrub after him.

The Castlemaine Botanical Gardens contains a large collection of impressive trees, some of which are quite rare, and although many of the original buildings and the second lake have disappeared it is still possible to imagine Castlemaine citizens of the last century promenading along the gravel paths.

## Conclusion

Today Castlemaine and district is acknowledged as a centre of both historic and contemporary gardens of great value. The interest in gardening continues and is reflected in the fact that Castlemaine hosted two horticultural events last November; a four-day garden festival and the first National Heritage Rose Conference. 



## The Big Tree



Visitors passing through Guildford in central Victoria will notice signposts directing them to "The Big Tree".

This impressive River Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) is listed on the National Trust's Register of Significant Trees, and is estimated to be between 700 and 1,000 years old.

Koori people who have inspected the tree, referring to it as a honey tree, say it is a species where individual trees were owned by individual Aborigines. A plaque adjacent to the Big Tree of Guildford states it is "The largest known in Victoria. Girth at base 42 ft, height 85 ft. Burke and Wills are believed to have camped under this tree."

In recent years the tree has had considerable publicity as the SEC wanted to lop some of its branches, due to the close proximity of nearby power lines.

However, thanks to a dedicated group of local residents, who wanted the tree to remain intact, the SEC has now agreed to divert power lines around the Big Tree. This relocation of the lines will ensure that residents and visitors can enjoy and appreciate the Big Tree and its natural splendour, and highlights a successful solution to a problem, with both parties being satisfied with the outcome.

by Gail THOMAS

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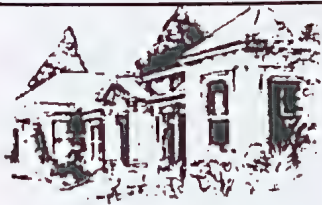
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# *The First National Heritage Rose Conference, 21st to 24th November 1991*

by *Tim NORTH*

**T**here could hardly have been a more appropriate location for the first National Heritage Rose Conference than the old gold mining town of Castlemaine in central Victoria.

Victoria's goldfields comprise an important part of our country's heritage, and the area, as we were to discover, is studded with delightful old, and some not so old, gardens, in all of which flourish roses, old and again not so old.

Some 150 enthusiasts from all over Australia, as well as a small contingent from New Zealand — professional rose growers, nursery-people and amateurs — gathered for this three day conference to hear a number of distinguished speakers, including Charles Walker jnr from North Carolina, founder of Heritage Rose Foundation USA, talk about their favourite topic — old roses.

Attention focussed not so much on what we do know, but on what still remains to be identified or discovered. Both Charles Walker and Clive Winmill, of Badgers' Keep Nursery at nearby Chewton, stressed the difficulties in making positive identification in many cases. This was emphasised in a vivid manner by the exhibition entitled "Our Silent Past, Australia's Heritage of Unnamed Roses", which drew an astonishing 300-odd entries; while the experts were able to name some of these, many will continue to bear "pet" names or simply be "Anon". One wonders, considering how easily roses can hybridise in the wild, how many have ever been given a name.

Robert Peace had a leading question to ask; "Are we worthy custodians (of our heritage of old roses)?" and he pointed to the havoc


that can be wrought in the name of "tidiness" by herbicides and brush-cutters. How many roses (and of course the same applies to most other garden plants) have been lost through neglect, through ignorance, or in mistaken attempts to "tidy up" old gardens, cemeteries, church yards, and so on? Susan Irvine, who has spent ten years in tracking down the roses bred by Alister Clark, had to admit that we will probably never find them all. For Alister Clark, Australia's most noted rose breeder, was interested in "garden" roses, not "show" roses, and it was the latter that captured popular imagination until a few years ago.

Tom Garnett recalled the life and work of Alister Clark, while Deane Ross and Suzanne Price gave practical advice on using old roses in the garden. David Ruston had his audience spellbound as he produced more and yet more gorgeous blooms to make stunning arrangements in vases which would have brought envy to the heart of many a collector.

A range of short workshop sessions covered such topics as roses for period gardens, collecting Alister Clark roses, propagation, training, food and drink from roses, and researching garden history. Field trips covered two important gardens in the area, Bleak House at Malmesbury, established by Susan Irvine but now managed by Barbara Perry, Jenni Mather and Penny Smith, and Graham Geddes' garden at Taradale, now under the direction of Clive and Margaret Winmill. A number of private gardens in and around Castlemaine were also open for inspection on the Friday and Saturday. The Conference concluded with a garden party in the delightful gardens

of Buda (the subject of an article in this journal in June/July 1991).

What message for the future was there in all this? It was, not surprisingly, Charles Walker, founder of the heritage rose movement in the US, and Trevor Nottle, founder of its Australian counterpart, who spelled out the message, and they were in unison. Charles Walker stressed the need to establish specific goals — to increase membership, improve public credibility, gain support from other organizations, and work towards closer international co-operation. Preservation, he said, was often left to the individual, but this should not be so. Trevor also stressed the need for better communication among rose growers, for the Society to be one of **active** members; one aim, he said, was the establishment of a National Rose Collection. As a parting thought he reminded us that we should be looking at ways of gardening with less water, and roses do not need large amounts of water.

There is no doubt that this inaugural conference augurs well for Heritage Roses in Australia. It was organised with great efficiency, energy and tact by four local members — Lee Wooster, Heather Osborne, Joanne Wade and Diane Thompson, together with a band of hard working  volunteers.

## *Opposite Page —*

*(top left) Bleak House — Kyneton*

*(top right) Graham Geddes' garden at Taradale.*

*(bottom) Charles Walker jnr (USA), with Dolina Barker from Christchurch, NZ and Joanne Wade in the garden at Buda.*

*all photos by Keva North*





*Note: Heritage Roses in Australia Inc, formed in 1979, is a fellowship of those who care about old garden, species and shrub roses. Contact between members is maintained by a journal published four times a year. Where members are in close geographical contact regional groups have been formed under regional co-ordinators. These groups hold periodic informal meetings, usually in one another's gardens.*

*For the next two years the central administration of the Society will be in the hands of the South Australian group, under the Presidency of David Ruston. The Second National Heritage Rose Conference will be held in South Australia in 1993.*

*The annual subscription is \$12 per year, and application for membership may be made to the Hon Treasurer, Mr Colin Rayner, c/- Post Office, Crafers, SA 5152.*







# Perfume in a Canberra Garden

*Continuing our series on lady gardeners,  
**Tim NORTH** talks with **Peronelle  
WINDEYER** in her garden in the  
Canberra suburb of Red Hill.*

*photos by Keva North*

**Peronelle, your father and mother, Barney and Marion Hutton, have a great interest in, and knowledge of, plants and gardens. Did you share that interest as a child?**

It was really my grandmother in England who gave me my early interest. She treated all her plants as personalities, and I used to love walking round her garden with her and listening to her talking about them. My father at that time was really a frustrated gardener, as neither he nor my mother had much opportunity or time for gardening until he retired and went to live in Mount Macedon. But now, of course, he gives me lots of advice and every time my parents visit they bring a plant or two from their garden.

**Was this your first garden, or did you have one before this?**

This was my first real garden as earlier we either moved frequently or else were living with a small space on sandy soil and the salt winds of Bronte in Sydney.

**Was there a garden when you came, or did you start with nothing?**

Virtually nothing. When we came there were some dead or dying trees and shrubs scattered around the front. We had the whole area ploughed and everything removed except the pear tree near the entrance; so we really started with a ploughed space.

**Did you have a fixed idea of the sort of garden you wanted?**

I had a basic plan. I wanted a path from the front door down to the

way in off the street. We managed to get some local bricks which have now mellowed quite nicely. I wanted privacy from the street, and a garden that wrapped around the house; a sort of "cottagey" look with plants growing over the edges of the paths and in crevices between the bricks; lots of climbers and lots of perfumed plants. Perfumes in a garden are very important to me.

**Looking back, did you make many mistakes?**

I was too impatient. I wanted to do everything at once and everything to start growing at once.

**What have you found to be the main constraints to gardening in Canberra?**

We do have quite severe frosts in winter, and on the other hand summer can be very hot and dry. We have a heavy clay soil, and the whole garden is on a slope which means water tends to run off without soaking into the soil.

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*"When we came  
there were some dead or  
dying trees and shrubs  
scattered around the front."*

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Keeping enough water where it is needed is quite a problem.

**All the borders are well mulched. What materials do you mainly use?**

There are plenty of leaves in Canberra in autumn. My husband and I go out and sweep up leaves on the side of the street or wherever we can find them. Some we put straight onto the borders and let them rot there, others we compost. The following year we dig in the mulch and put on fresh. When we started we covered the

ones I'm reasonably certain are going to do well.

**There are a lot of self-sown plants in your garden. Do you allow all these to grow where they will, or are you ruthless with them?**

Not as much as I should be. I tend to let everything grow, including quite a few weeds, so the borders are not as "tidy" as they might be. But if a plant isn't doing well where I've planted it I'll try it in another spot to see if it does better there.

That *Chimonanthus*, for example, was originally at the back of the house but it didn't like being there; so I moved it to the front and it hasn't looked back since.

**Roses, especially shrub and old-fashioned ones, seem to be a favourite. Do you have other special favourites?**


I like all old types of plants, "cottage garden" plants, in fact. I think these really suit many suburban gardens better than native plants. I also wanted the

perfumes of childhood memories and other gardens. A number of plants are close enough to the front door for their perfumes to waft in, like Port Wine Magnolia, roses, Madonna lilies, Daphne, *Chimonanthus*, pinks and Jasmine.

**Do you use any chemical sprays?**

Only when I have to. I prefer sprays like pyrethrum. But now I've got everything growing and the garden is fairly thickly planted I find there is a sort of natural balance, so I don't get as many bugs as I used to.

**You have a fulltime job, so I presume you are only a weekend gardener?**

Sometimes not even a weekend one. This is really the main problem. I never have enough time for the garden so it does have to look after itself at times. But I try to walk round it every day, just to see what needs doing, what is coming up, and just to enjoy all the lovely perfumes. 

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*"I tend to let everything grow, including quite a few weeds, so the borders are not as "tidy" as they might be."*

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beds with poultry manure and a deep mulch. Now I use Dynamic Lifter and mulch.

**Having worked through your original plan, are you going to make many changes?**

The garden is always evolving, and I'm always getting new ideas. Now I would like less lawn in the front, so I plan to extend one border and make a new one.

**Are there many plants you would like to grow, but find you can't?**

There are some I would like to try when I can get around to it, like hostas. But I'm not really a collector and am happy to stick to the





# ARTISTS IN THE GARDEN

## 6 — Robyn Lawson

### Qualifications

Primary school teacher, 1963-82

Associate Diploma of Ceramics, Canberra Institute of the Arts, 1984

### Exhibitions

- 1985: Chapman Gallery, Canberra
- 1986: Crafts Council Gallery, Canberra
- 1987: National Ceramics Award Exhibition, Canberra
- 1988: Studio Altenberg, Braidwood  
National Ceramics Award Exhibition, Canberra  
Cook's Hill Gallery, Newcastle
- 1989: Cook's Hill Gallery, Newcastle
- 1990: Urambi Village Community Centre, Canberra
- 1991: Cuppacumbalong, Canberra  
Urambi Village Community Centre, Canberra

### Personal Statement

A holiday sculpture course 15 years ago introduced me to the excitement of clay. An opportunity to pursue this interest full-time arose six years later; and things have developed from there.





Since completing a two-year diploma course at the Canberra Institute of the Arts in 1984, I have worked mostly with earthenware clay using underglaze colours and enamels on a white glaze and occasionally plain terracotta for its earthy directness.

The figurative pots are thrown in separate pieces on the wheel, then assembled and fiddled about with until I get what I want. They are then either glazed or slip-covered depending on their size.

I also make plates, bowls, planters and candlesticks, usually painted on in some way. At the moment it is faces that fascinate.

Living and working in Urambi Village, an assemblage of townhouses in Canberra that blends with a landscape full of trees and birds, is an absolute delight and often a source of inspiration for a plate or figure.

I am at present working for three exhibitions — Cuppacumbalong in September, Cook's Hill in November and Urambi Village in December.



(opposite) Garden Angel: terracotta slip-covered figure with candle.

(right) Gaudy umbrella pot: thrown and assembled earthenware, white glaze and enamels.



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# Nature. and Nature Strips

*David CLODE looks at the latest gardening trend — the Meadow Garden.*

**T**he word “Nature” evokes ideas of life and growth, quite a contrast to what we laughingly call “nature strips”. These are usually dull areas of grass, owned by your local council which you are obliged to mow. Likewise, we frequently mow and pour water and fertiliser onto the little used front lawn, with few rewards. Much more exciting is a pretty meadow garden which can be alive with flowers, butterflies and bees, all with little extra effort.

A meadow garden can be very easy to make and maintain, and it can be intricately designed for variety and a prolonged display of flowers. It can also be designed to require a minimum of resources in terms of water and fertiliser, which makes it environmentally sound and good for your leisure time.

While to many people a meadow conjures up a vision of “Capability” Brown and Humphrey Repton landscapes, so evocative of the English countryside, it is well suited to Australia, though a more pragmatic selection of plants may be necessary to create a low maintenance meadow for our conditions. Fortunately

some of the true English meadow plants are adaptable and natural meadow-type landscapes occur in other countries too. Critically their success depends upon low nutrient levels and the absence of aggressive and highly competitive grasses. In south-east Australia we can select suitable indigenous plants and plants from the Mediterranean, California, the Western Cape, and Chile. In any event, a lot of fun can be had experimenting with your meadow, watching it evolve in its own direction, as it surely will, and learning when to mow and when to collect seeds, which plants will be more aggressive and successful colonists. However, a cautious selection of plants is needed to avoid those that will be overly aggressive, or which could become invasive weeds in your own district.

Careful planning is necessary before you start your meadow garden. Firstly, the local council Parks and Gardens Department should be contacted. If the nature strip is maintained and doesn’t obscure the vision of car drivers, there shouldn’t be any problem; however, different local authorities have lists of plants



they will not permit, generally because of their potential to become weeds. Services such as gas and water may run under your nature strip and these may need attention occasionally. This will constitute a minor ecological disaster, so you may choose to develop a meadow that is easy to repair. Keep your rare gems to the front garden beds, or turn your front lawn into a meadow as well.

You will need to assess which areas are walked or driven on, and how frequently. Such areas are best mulched or sown with a relatively hardy plant like clover, *Phyla nodiflora* or *Dichondra repens*; you will find the common English daisy, *Bellis perennis*, especially good. Gardeners and other vandals may also be a problem.

Strangely, though few people create meadow gardens, when one is created it gets lots of interest. Neighbours may become jealous and there is every chance that your garden will be imitated, or more annoyingly, that your plants will be picked and taken home — such are the trials of success!

A selection of plants suited to the climate and soil of the site could eliminate the need for fertilising and watering. In practice, some watering, easily achieved with a soaker hose, and limited soil improvement, such as adding gypsum to heavy clay soils, may be desirable. Fertilising would only be necessary on light, sandy soils if you use plants not adapted to these soils. In general, however, extended cultivation and fertiliser application is not necessary and will only encourage the more vigorous grasses which grow apace and overwhelm your more delicate plants. Meadows have usually evolved in environments of low nutrient availability, and the plants do not need and are unable to respond effectively to increased nutrient levels.

Mowing once or twice a year may be beneficial or may not be needed depending on your selection of plants. Mowing can reduce seeding of weedy species and will cut down dead and untidy foliage and flowers, which should result in fresh growth and flowers. The timing of mowing is important as you don't want to mow down developing flower buds or remove the seeds ➔

(opposite page) Kangaroo Grass is a food plant for the Common Brown butterfly. Paper Daisies provide nectar for adult butterflies (yellow *Helichrysum apiculatum*, white *Helipterum anthemoides*).

(right) Many species of butterfly larvae live on native grasses, and seeds provide food for small birds. This is *Danthonia caespitosa*.

(below) The graceful heads of *Stipa falcata*, Spear Grass.

all photos by David Clode





of the desirable meadow plants, which may have flowered and be producing seeds. In annuals this seeding process is absolutely critical if you don't want to re-sow annually; many perennials, too, will spread more quickly if permitted to seed. Mowing may benefit others by spreading runners or plant pieces. Many bulbs also should not have their leaves cut off immediately after flowering, as the leaves continue photosynthesising until they die back. Freesias, sparaxis and muscari seem to perform regardless.

A weed free start to your meadow is important, and later weeding can be done by hand or with a weed wand. Hand weeding will cause soil disturbance, allowing weeds to germinate or invade, so always sow seeds where the weeds were.

For an effective display you will need to consider the timing of your display, either for specific seasons, or sporadically throughout the year. Also choose a colour scheme, perhaps cool pastel colours like pinks and lilacs, or warm vibrant yellows and oranges. Blue and white seem to be compatible with all other colours. For a natural look, use only natural species and avoid garish hybrids. Plants which are normally low growing are easier to manage, if you don't want to have to cut through your nature strip with a machete. However, a dense taller growing meadow made up of plants of various heights will be a better habitat for wildlife.

Choose a mixture of annuals, bulbs and a few stalwart perennials (which should overcome the need to apply nutrients to the soil) as the mainstay of your meadow. One of these could be a nitrogen-fixing legume like clover. Bulbs provide grassy foliage and are a better choice than most lawn grasses which tend to increase the need for mowing, fertilising and watering.

However, you can use some of the sparser grasses, for example many of our native grasses. Some native grasses you could try are *Stipa falcata*, *S. elegantissima* and many *Danthonia* species. Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*) attracts plenty of insects. Many of these grasses provide food for butterfly larvae and seeds for small birds like finches. The interior of larger tussock grasses, such as *Poa labillardieri* and *Pennisetum alopecuroides*, provide a protected micro-

climate much favoured by lizards. In fact Australia's arid interior has a higher population of lizards than other comparable parts of the world due to spinifex grasses, which provide lizards with protection from extreme heat and cold.

Many different plants can be used, but beware of losing the dramatic effect of just one to three species performing at once. The plants lists which follow are just a few suggestions, with an emphasis on attracting wildlife to the meadow. Many other plants, such as poppies, are certainly appropriate but have relatively little value in attracting bees, butterflies, dragonflies and so on.

Obviously, pesticides should not be used, or at least their use minimised and only low toxicity, non-residual chemicals used. Many of these plants will also attract hoverflies and predatory wasps, which provide biological control of pests like aphids. Plants that are listed as attracting bees or butterflies are

included on the basis of Australian and overseas information or personal experience. There is no guarantee that they will work where you live. On the other hand bees and butterflies have been observed visiting exotic plants in preference to indigenous plants, while most bees that you are likely to see and some butterflies are not native anyway.



Bluebells and freesias flowering through an unmown lawn of buffalo grass.



## Plant lists

Legend	Propagation	Cultivation
B may attract bees	C cuttings	E easy
X may attract butterflies, or serve as food for larvae	D division	A average
	S seed	D difficult
	R runners	

Botanic name	Common name	Animal Propagation	Cultivation	Attracted
<b>Annuals</b>				
Acroclinium roseum	Paper Daisy	X	S	D needs good drainage
Anchusa capensis	Forget-me-not	B	S	E spreads easily by seed
Bellis perennis	English Daisy	B	S	E spreads easily by seed
Brachycome iberidifolia	Swan River Daisy	X	S,C	E
Centaurea cyanea	Cornflower	B,X	S	E
Dianthus species	Sweet William	X	C	E
Dimorphotheca species	Naquand Daisy	B	C,R	E
Dorotheanthus bellidiformis	Livingstone Daisy	B	S	E
Iberis umbellata	Candytuft	X	S	E
Limnanthes douglasii	Poached Egg Plant	B	S	A, needs moisture
Lobularia maritima	Allysum	B	S	E
Malcolmia maritima	Virginia Stock	X	S	E
Myosotis sylvatica	Forget-me-not	B	S	E, spreads easily by seed
Nemophila menziesii	Baby Blue Eyes	B	S	E
Papaver alpinum	Alpine Poppy	B	S	A
Portulaca grandiflora	Portulaca	B	S	E
Trifolium incarnatum	Crimson Clover	B,X	S	E
Viola species	Viola, Heartsease, Johnny Jump Up	X	S	A
<b>Perennials</b>				
Ajuga species	Carpet Bugle	B	C,R	E
Anthemis species	Chamomile Daisies	insects	C,R	E
Armeria maritima	Thrift, Sea Pink	B,X	D,S	E
Aubretia species	Aubretia	X	S,C	A
Aurina saxatilis	Yellow Alyssum	X	S,C	A
Brachycome segmentosa		X	S,C	E
Brachycome multifida	Swan River Daisy	X	C	E
Campanula gorganica	Campanulas	X	C,D	E
Campanula glomerata		X	C,D	E
Campanula persicifolia		X	C,D	E
Campanula rotundifolia		X	C,D	E
Centaurea species	Cornflowers	B,X	S	E
Convolvulus mauritanicus		B,X	C,S	E
Coronilla varia	Crown Vetch	B,X	S	E, vigorous
Erysimum perovskianum	Treacle Mustard	X	C,S	E
Felicia amelloides	Kingfisher Daisy	B,X	C	E
Fragaria species	Alpine Strawberry	B,X,birds	R	E
Geranium species	Cranesbill	X	D,S	E
Helianthemum nummularium	Rock Rose	X	C	E,
dry spot Helichrysum species	Everlasting Daisy	X	C,S	E
Hesperis matronalis	Sweet Rocket	B,X	S	E
Iberis species	Candytuft	X	C,S	E
Knautia arvensis	Field Scabious	B,X	S	E
Limonium latifolium	Statice	B,X	S	A
Lithospermum diffusum	Gromwell	B	C	A



Botanic name	Common name	Animal Propagation	Cultivation	Attracted
Lupinus lutea	Yellow Lupin	B	S	E
Mentha species	Mints	B	C,D	E
Myosotis species	Forget-me-not	B,X	S	E
Nepeta cataria	Catnip	B,X	C,D	E
Onobrychis vicifolia	Sanfoin	B,X	S	E
Origanum species	Marjoram, Oregano	B	S,D	E
Phlox species	Phlox	X	S,D	D
Primula species	Primula	X	S	E
Scabiosa species	Scabious	Bugs	S	E
Thymus species	Thyme	B	C,S	E
Trifolium species	Clover	B,X	S	E
Verbena species	Verbena	X	S,C	E
Viola species	Violets	X	S	A
Vittadinia australis	New Holland Daisy	X	S	E
<b>Bulbs and bulb-like plants</b>				
Burchardia species	Milkmaids	X	S	A
Colchicum species	Autumn Crocus	B	D	D
Crocus species	Crocus	B	D	D
Dichopogon strictus	Chocolate Lily	X	S	A
Kniphofia, dwarf species	Red Hot Poker	birds	D,S	E
Scilla/Endymion species	Bluebells	B,X	D	A
Stylidium species	Trigger Plant	X	S	A
Thysanotus species	Fringe Lily	X	S	A
<b>Succulents and drought tolerant plants</b>				
Carpobrotus species		B	C,R	E
Crassula anomala		B	C	E
Disphyma species	Noon Flower	B	C,R	E
Dorotheanthus species	Livingstone Daisy	B	S	A
Gazania species	Gazania	B	S,C,R E	
Glycine species	Glycine	B	S	E
Lampranthus species	Ice Plant, Pig-face	B	C,R	E
Osteospermum species	Veldt daisy	B	C,R	E
Phyla nodiflora		B	C,R	E
Sedum species		B,X	C	E
Swainsonia species		B	S	E
<b>Native Grassland Plants</b>				
Brunonia australis	Blue Pincushion	X	S	A
Danthonia species	Wallaby Grass	X, birds	D,S	E
Helichrysum species	Paper Daisy	X	C,S	E
Lomandra species	Mat Rush	X	D,S	E
Pennisetum alopecuroides	Feather Grass	X,birds	D,S	E
Pimelia humilis	Small Rice Flower	X	C	D
Poa species	Tussock Grass	X,birds	D,S	E
Podolepis species		X,hoverflies	S,C	E
Psoralea tenax		B,X	S	E
Scavaeola species	Fan Flower	X	C,R	E
Stipa species	Speargrass	X,birds	D,S	E
Themeda triandra	Kangaroo Grass	X,birds	D,S	E
Xanthorrhoea minor	Small Grass Tree	X,bees	S	A
<b>Some small woody plants could be included:</b>				
Correa species	Native Fuchsia	Honeyeaters	C	E
Epacris impressa	Native Heath	Honeyeaters	C	A
Leptospermum myrsinoides	Silky Tea Tree	Insects	S,C	E
Pimelia species	Rice Flower	X	C	E
Pultenaea species	Bush Pea	B,X	S	E



## Some plant combinations worth trying:

A very simple and easy approach for those who just want to brighten up their nature strips is to use one or two vigorous and hardy ground covers that flower for an extended period. With some species, cuttings can be struck directly into the ground; eg *Osteospermum ecklonis*, *gazanias*, *Phyla* and *Erigeron karvinskianus*.

For the more adventurous the following plant combinations are worth considering:

- cool colour scheme: white, pink and lilac. Blue flowers can also be included.  
*Verbena*, *Scabious*, *Brachycome multifida* or *Helichrysum baxteri*, White Clover, *Convolvulus mauritanicus*.  
*Alyssum*, *Bellis*, *Phyla*, *Iberis*, *Danthonia caespitosa*, Crimson or Red clover, *Convolvulus*  
*Dianthus*, *Verbena*, *Stipa elegantissima*, *Thyme*, *Phlox*, *Armeria*, *Colchicum* or *Crocus*
- cool colours, moist and part shade.  
wild strawberry, *Parochetus communis*, *Viola*, Forget-me-not, *Mentha*, *Primula*, Bluebells
- Yellow and white.  
*Limnanthes*, *Anthemis nobilis*, *A. tinctoria*, *Zephyranthes candida*, White Clover,

*Erysimum perovskianum*, *Freesias*,  
*Helichrysum baxteri*.

- Blue and yellow  
*Felicia amelloides*, *Dimorphotheca aurtantiacum* or *Calendula* (single flowered), *Erysimum*, *Ajuga*, *Lupinus*, *Helichrysium scorpioides* or *H. bracteatum*.  
*Helichrysum apiculatum*, *Centaurea*, *Limnanthes*, *Lupinus*, *Lithospermum*, *Nemophila*, *Ajuga*.
- Coastal gardens, sandy soil in full sun.  
*Carpobrotus*, *Lampranthus*, *Crassula* (cool or warm colours available), *Dorotheanthus*, *Lomandra*, *Pultenaea tenuifolia* or *Swainsonia*, *Disphyma*.  
*Scavaeola*, *Helichrysum bracteatum*, *Phyla*, *Armeria*, *Coronilla*, *Freesia refracta alba*.  
*Osteospermum*, *Convolvulus*, *Stipa falcata*, *Lotus australis* or *Glycine*, *Erigeron karvinskianus*.
- Native grassland.  
*Stipa elegantissima*, *Pennisetum*, *Swainsonia*, *Helichrysum bracteatum*, *Helipterum anthemoides*, *Dichopogon*, *Brunonia australis*, *Brachycome multifida*.  
*Themeda*, *Poa morrissii*, *Danthonia*, *Helichrysum scorpioides*, *Brachycome segmentosa*, *Stylidium*, *Phyla*, *Burchardia*.



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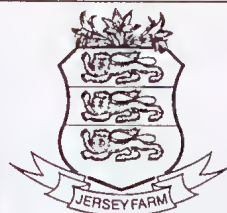
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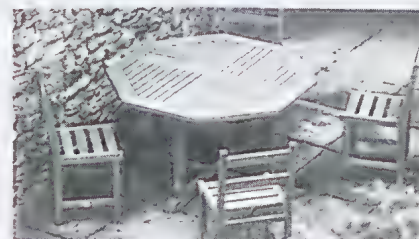


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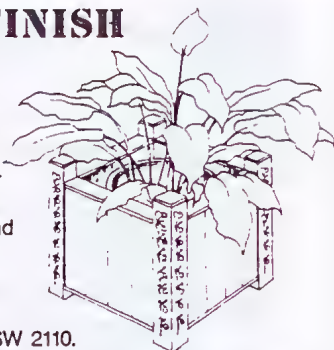
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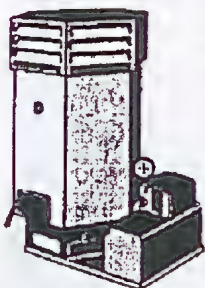
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## PRODUCT NEWS



### The Perma-Log range

The Perma-Log range of treated pine products, manufactured by CSR Softwoods, consists of logs for retaining walls, pickets and palings for fencing, decking and lattice, and structural timber for gazebos and pergolas.

Perma-Log is made from plantation timber and has been specially treated so that it will not rot, will resist termite attack, and can be left to weather or painted or stained.

DIY project sheets give step-by-step instructions on how to build a pergola, retaining wall, pool fence or deck. Brochures and project sheets are available free of charge from CSR Softwoods approved distributors or from traditional timber information centres in all States.

### A new electric grass trimmer

The first electric grass trimmer from Stihl, which formerly produced only petrol engine powered models, introduces new features. In one of the two new models, the FE40, the length of the nylon cutting line automatically increases in length as it wears out — no need to stop the machine to pull it out by hand or bang the

head on the ground. In the other model, the FE35, a simple pull on a trigger on the control handle will increase the length of line.

The FE40 has a telescopic handle, and handles on both models are adjustable up and down and round the shaft, to suit vertical or horizontal cutting. Safety features include a heavy duty polymer guard, and a strong wire bar to protect the cutting head from hitting hard objects. A built-in cord holder prevents the plug from being accidentally pulled out. The cutting head is designed with fins which not only cool the motor, but disperse clippings and dirt.

### An indoor plant potting mixture

Debco received the only award for new gardening products given at the National Hardware and Gardening Products Trade Show, held in Melbourne in August 1991. The product which won the award was Debco Indoor Plant and Hanging Basket mixture, incorporating the latest technology in water storing granules. This mixture conforms to the Australian Standard for premium grade potting mixes and comes with a five year warranty on the water storing granule component and twelve months unconditional shelf life warranty.

## *The American Council for Plant Preservation*

**T**he American Council for Plant Preservation, the formation of which has recently been announced, is a non-profit organization comprising some of the best known names in American horticulture.

It is modelled after the National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens in England and has been formed with their assistance.

Its goals are:

1. To encourage the conservation of uncommon plants that are valuable because of their historic, aesthetic, scientific or educational value by propagating and distributing them as widely as possible.
2. To list plants held in important collections and gardens.

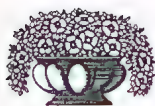
3. To stimulate the widest possible cultivation of uncommon and endangered plants by arranging conferences, exhibitions, discussions and visits to gardens, specialist plants collections and nurseries.
4. To encourage the re-introduction and distribution of uncommon and endangered plants.
5. To establish and support National Collections of specific genera and other defined collections of plants for the enjoyment and information of the public and the benefit of science.

The Council is seeking enquiries from both private gardeners, institutions and nurseries who may be interested in holding National Collections.



*The Executive Director is Mr Barry Glick, of Sunshine Farm and Gardens, Renick, West Virginia, 24966.*





## GARDEN CUTTINGS



### Ellagic acid

Scientists are now seeking to improve the vitamin content of plants and the amount of other health-promoting or protective substances.

One of these substances is ellagic acid, described as a phenol present in a wide range of plants. Ellagic acid is effective as an antimutagen and anticarcinogen and has potential as an inhibitor of chemically induced cancer, as well as showing anti-viral activity, promoting blood clotting and possibly lowering blood pressure.

Ellagic acid also seems to play several important roles in plants. In some cases it protects against fungal attack and can act as an allelopathic agent, inhibiting the growth of competing plants or even plants of the same species. In some plants, ranging from geraniums and roses to oaks, ellagic acid is an inhibitor of insect growth and a deterrent to insect feeding.

(From 'The Avant Gardener', published by Horticultural Data Processors, New York).

### Restoration for a heritage-listed Palm House

A \$1.1 million fundraising appeal has been launched for the restoration of the c. 1877 Palm House at the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide, which has become unsafe owing to corrosion of the glazing bars. A conservation study to establish a program for restoration was carried out last year by SACON in conjunction with Le Messurier Architects. The study revealed that the Adelaide Palm House is unique in the world; the engineering techniques used in its construction were very advanced and make it a benchmark in glasshouse design. It is a rare example of wrought and cast-iron and of a tropical plant house of the mid to late 19th century, very few of which have survived in an original condition. Designed by German architect Gustav Runge and imported from Bremen in 1877 the Palm House is well known and

much loved by the Adelaide community, and the community's support is sought for this project through a tax deductible donation scheme and a variety of community events.

### Courses in self-sufficiency

The Australian Horticultural Correspondence School is helping many people beat the recession by providing them with skills training in self-sufficiency. A full range of courses is now available for beginners through to the avid enthusiast, covering the growing and processing of vegetables, fruits, berries and nuts; planning an adequate diet; utilising the products from domestic animals; health and fitness; building with natural products; and energy conservation. For further information phone the School on (03)736.1882 or call at 264 Swansea Road, Lilydale, Vic or its new Queensland office, PO Box 2092, Nerang East, Qld 4211, tel (075)30.4855.

### A garden trowel that helps disadvantaged and sick children

Proceeds from the sale of the Aust Aid garden trowel go towards helping Sydney's Prince of Wales Childrens' Hospital and other charities throughout Australia. The trowel is manufactured by Mr E.A. Aust of Adelaide, who conceived the idea after setting up the Aust Foundation in 1981 as a means of helping poverty-stricken, ill or other disadvantaged children both in Australia and overseas. Marketed on a non-profit basis this trowel has, in ten years, raised over \$100,000 for the Aust Foundation and its range of charities. In New South Wales the Prince of Wales Childrens' Hospital is the sole beneficiary from sales.

The trowel can be purchased for \$8 from the Mrs Australia Community Achievement Awards (NSW), Private Mailbag 15, Pennant Hills, 2120. The telephone number for enquiries is (02)875.0915.

### The Water Hyacinth

The water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) grows so densely that it can choke waterways, cut oxygen supplies and reduce light. In the resulting stagnant water plants under the water hyacinth die and rot, producing offensive smelling gases. Fish and invertebrate fauna either die or leave the waterway. In the right conditions it can double the area of water it covers every two weeks.

Water hyacinth has been declared a noxious weed across Australia, and a fine of up to \$2,000 can be levied on anyone growing or selling it. Yet it has recently been seen offered for sale at Trash and Treasure markets in Victoria, so the Victorian Department of Conservation and Environment is appealing to anyone who sees it being grown or sold at markets to contact the Department on (03)706.7000 or (03)651.3038. If discovered, it should not be thrown away since it will survive and keep on spreading, but should be dried and burnt.

### A new generation rose

'Rose Carpet', bred in Germany by Werner Noack, has just been launched in Australia. Described as forming a compact bush to around 60 cm in height, 'Rose Carpet' has nearly iridescent rose pink flowers from spring through to early winter and is evergreen in all but the coldest climates. It is mildew free, virtually free of black spot and requires minimal pruning. It can be used to edge driveways or borders, as ground cover, or in pots or hanging baskets.

'Rose Carpet' won a Gold Medal at the International Rose Contest in The Hague in 1988 and again at the International Trade Fair at Boskoop. In 1990 it was the only rose to gain the required 75 points in the All Deutschland ADRose test. It has been trialed in Tasmania, Western Australia and Queensland, where it has proved its versatility and its exceptional disease resistance. It is being distributed to nurseries throughout Australia by Australian Plant Promotions of Silvan, Vic.



# Kirstenbosch Botanic Garden, Capetown

by Tom CROSSEN



*Devil's Peak, Kirstenbosch Botanic Garden.*

## Introduction

"What exactly is a botanic garden?" It is emphatically not just a park with pretty flowers. Perhaps the following extract from *Hortus III* (1977) appears the most apt definition:

"A botanical garden is a controlled and staffed institution for the maintenance of a living collection of plants under scientific management for purposes of education and research, together with such libraries, herbaria,

laboratories and museums as are essential to its particular undertakings. Each botanical garden naturally develops its own special field of interests depending on its personnel, location, extent, available funds and the terms of its charter. It may include greenhouses, test grounds, an herbarium, an arboretum and other departments. It maintains a scientific as well as a plant-growing staff, and publication is one of its

major modes of expression. The essential element is the acquisition and dissemination of botanical knowledge".

It is also an area of passive recreation, and by that is meant strolling or taking photographs, resting, viewing and observing. For many people a walk through a garden serves as refreshment for the spirit, and the tranquillity becomes a balm for soothing those harried by stress. ➡



How then does Kirstenbosch fit into this pattern? Along with the seven Southern African regional gardens in Nelspruit, Roodepoort, Harrismith, Bloemfontein, Pietermaritzburg, Worcester and Betty's Bay, it constitutes the National Botanic Gardens. This is an autonomous body operating under its own Act of Parliament (Forest Act, 1984) and is governed by a Board. It was founded in 1913 and now ranks as one of the world's leading botanic gardens.

Whereas the other gardens in the National Botanic Gardens concentrate on local flora, Kirstenbosch endeavours to grow plants from all over South Africa. At present more than one-third of the approximately 22,000 species of plants indigenous to South Africa can be found growing at Kirstenbosch.

Visitors to Kirstenbosch cannot fail to be impressed by the magnitude and beauty of the natural setting which overlooks and surrounds the garden. Situated on the eastern slopes of Table Mountain, with a winter rainfall of approximately 1,500 mm a year, the Garden's 528 hectares supports a rich fynbos flora and coastal forest vegetation. 60 hectares of the Garden are intensively developed to display the living collections of plants which have horticultural potential, are of botanical interest, enjoy rare and endangered status or which are used for educational and scientific purposes.

The soils are clayish in places, derived from granite. These mainly well drained, acid soils require much organic material and feeding to produce the fine displays of plants and colour.

The design of the Garden is informal, making use at all times of the existing natural features. Local materials have been used whenever possible in the construction of rockeries, paving, steps, ramps and terraces. Extensive use has been made of these features to display plants and provide easy and comfortable access to an interesting and varied topography for all members of the community.

The development of the Garden started in the Dell, where Colonel

Bird's bath is the attractive focal point. The cycad collection was the first significant collection of plants to be established in the Garden and these were planted in the amphitheatre above the bath.

The three amber coloured mountain streams which flow through the Garden are seasonal, but the four springs which provide Colonel Bird's bath with crystal clear water are perennial.

The next important development was the construction of the Mathew's Rockery, planted with various succulent plants from dry areas of the country. The section for the spectacular spring annual display was created next and the main lawn established with its series of limpid ponds fed by the streams from the Dell.

After this initial period the Garden remained relatively static until 1967 when the landscaping of the Protea and Erica Gardens was undertaken. This was made possible by the construction of a large storage dam and the installation of a water reticulation system throughout the entire developed area.

## History

Shortly after the arrival of the first Dutch settlers at the Cape, in 1660 Governor Jan van Riebeeck planted a barrier of wild almonds (*Brabejum stellatifolium*) to protect the cattle of the small colony from marauding Hottentots. Portions of this hedge still exist in the Garden.

Part of the Kirstenbosch area was developed as farmland and many oaks were introduced to provide shade. The estate was purchased by Cecil John Rhodes in 1895 as part of his plan of preserving the eastern slope of Table Mountain for the people of South Africa. Rhodes established the avenues of Moreton Bay Figs (*Ficus macrophylla*) and Camphor Trees (*Cinnamomum camphora*) which are a prominent feature of the Garden today. On his death in 1902 Rhodes bequeathed Kirstenbosch to the nation.

In 1913 the National Botanic Gardens was founded to study and

promote the indigenous flora of Southern Africa. Its first Director was Professor Harold Pearson. The Government contributed one thousand pounds per annum towards the maintenance of the Garden and to augment these funds the Botanical Society of South Africa was established. In the early days the sale of wood and the distilling of buchu oil were all essential activities to generate much needed money.

The second Director was Professor Harold Compton and he served in this capacity for 35 years, during which steady progress was made and the herbarium which now bears his name was commenced. Professor Brian Rycroft was appointed his successor in 1953 and the concept of regional gardens was realised during his 30 year term of office. The present Director is Professor Kobus Eloff and his plans for future development have been given extra impetus by the Forest Act of 1984 which has established the National Botanic Gardens as an autonomous body, from which the four functional areas of horticulture, research, plant utilization and education have been derived.

## Fragrance Garden

The plants in this area have been chosen for their aromatic properties and their unusual textures. They have been planted in waist high walks to enable visitors to feel them and to enjoy their various scents with ease. The *Agathosma* (buchu) species exude a pleasant fresh smell typical of the Cape fynbos, while the Cape May (*Coleonema album*) has a citrus-like scent which is most distinctive.

One of the most popular of the fragrant plants is the Pelargonium. The rose-scented species (*P. capitatum*) is used extensively in the perfume industry. There are other species which are peppermint-scented, lemon-scented, balsam-scented and apple-scented.

A well known aromatic group is the Lamiaceae (Mint family). This includes sage, mint, thyme, rosemary and lavender. Indigenous species are



the Wild Mint (*Mentha longifolia ssp capensis*), Wild Dagga (*Leonotis leonurus*) and the blue and brown *Salvia* species with their pungent leaves.

The largest family of flowering plants is the Asteraceae (Daisy family) and representing them in the Fragrance Garden are the two groundcovers *Arctotis auriculata* (Yellow Daisy) and *Dymondia margaretae* (Silver Carpet).

The well known Cape fynbos is made up mainly from the three families Proteaceae, Ericaceae and Restionaceae. These plants have all adapted to the heavy winter rainfall and the dry summers experienced at the Cape. The Proteaceae contain a number of genera of which the most popular are the proteas, leucospermums and leucadendrons. *Protea cynaroides* (King Protea) is the national floral emblem of South Africa.

Most of the ericas are ideal for rockeries and *Erica peziza* Honey

Heath) has honey-scented flowers. The restios (Cape reeds) largely take the place of grasses in the fynbos. Some species are used for thatching.

Fragrant geophytes are represented by the Iridaceae family of which the sweetly perfumed *Freesia alba* is probably the best known. Other scented garden flowers are the sandpypie (*Gladiolus carinatus*) with its blue to violet flowers and the dark purply-blue *Babiana ambigua*.

The Mesembryanthemaceae family (vygies) have been chosen on account of their leaf texture. They are fleshy and succulent and are adapted for water storage.

## Braille Trail

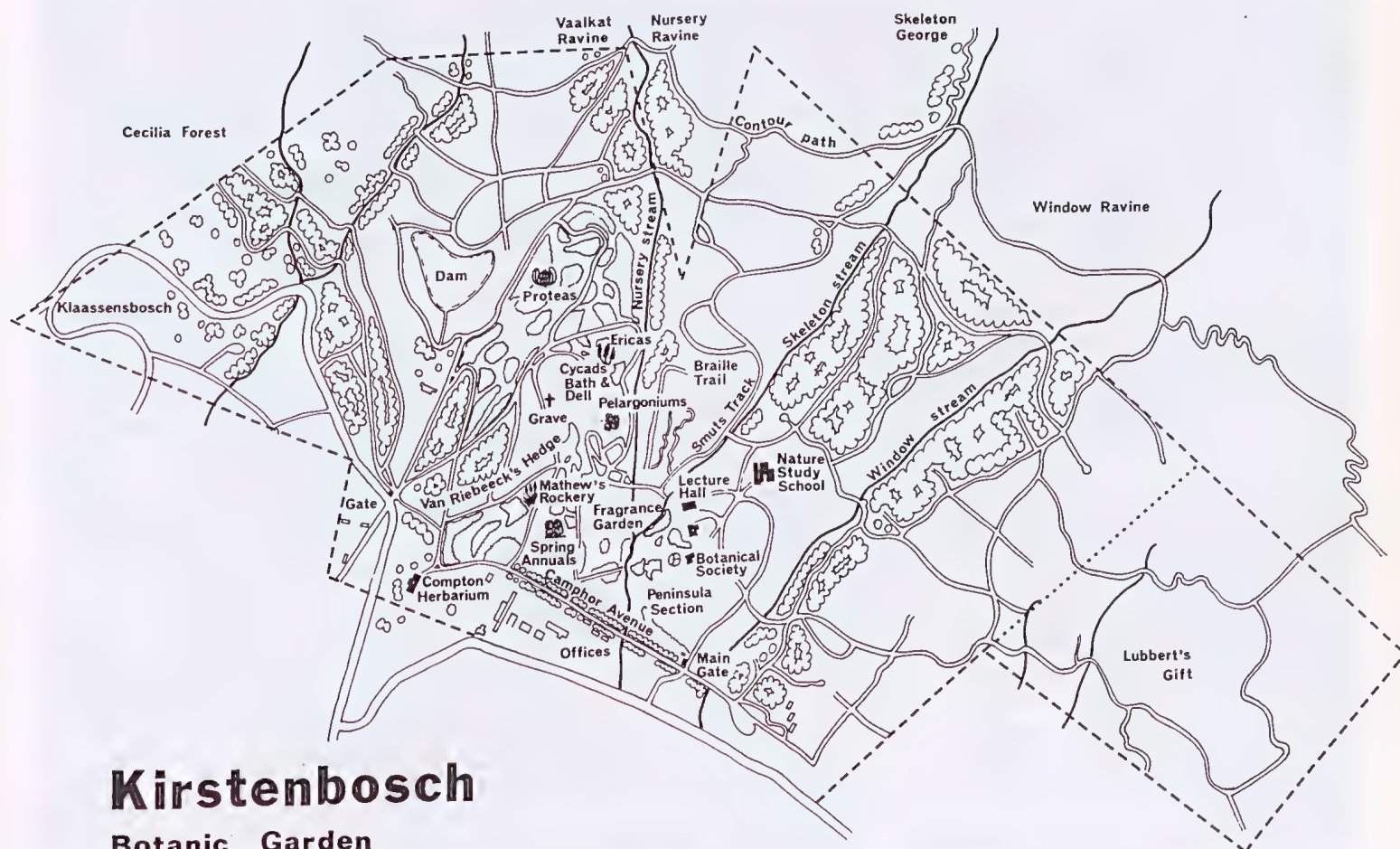
The Trail, about a 40 minute walk, is 470 metres long and is outlined by a guide rope. Ten sites have been chosen as suitable stopping points, and at each point selected plants have annotated labels in Braille and in large print. The sur-

rounding wooded and marshy area shelters a rich bird life. Among those to be seen and heard are the familiar laughing dove and the Cape white eye (glasogie) with its lively call. Larger birds, usually seen in convoys, are the Cape francolin and the guinea fowl (tarentaal). Probably the most attractive small bird is the orange breasted sunbird (Jangroentjie) with its metallic green plumage. It lives on a diet of nectar with ericas and proteas as its favourite sources of supply.

No Cape spring would be the same without the characteristic three-note call of the migrant Piet-my-vrou which can be heard from August to October.

## Indigenous Herb Garden

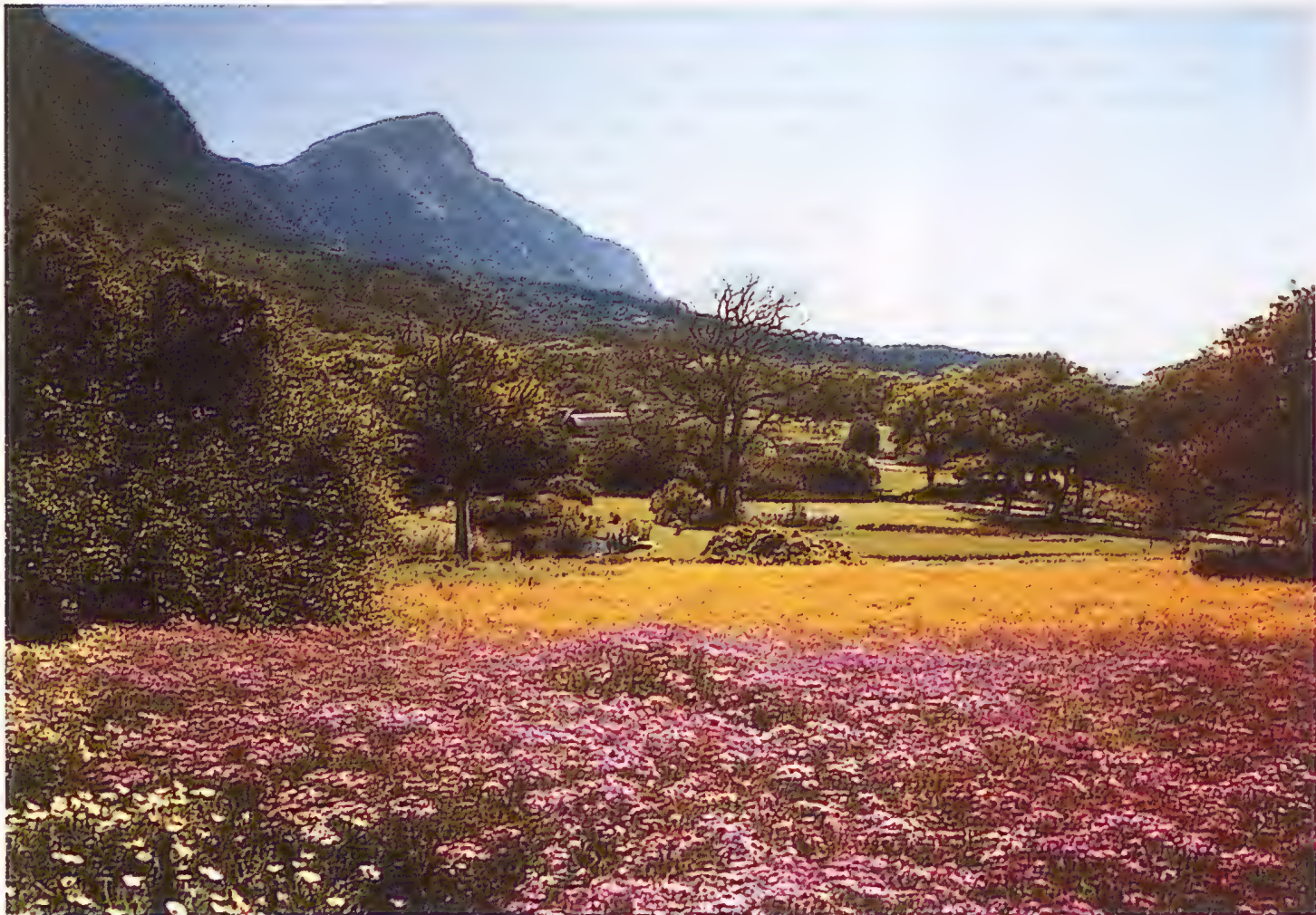
The word "herb" is used for those plants whose leaves, flowers, roots and stems are used for their medicinal, culinary or aromatic properties. ➡



# Kirstenbosch

## Botanic Garden





The design of the garden is semi-formal with the traditional sundial as a focal point.

Culinary herbs include Wild Rosemary (*Eriocephalus africanus*) and Wild Mint (*Mentha longifolia ssp capensis*), which can be used for seasoning meat and fish dishes. One of the best known of these plants is *Aspalathus linearis* from which the delicate rooibos tea is made. Another refreshing tea is the herbal honey tea which is prepared from the young flowering twigs of *Cyclopia genistoides*.

Many different plants are used for medicinal purposes but their use is not generally recommended as they can be dangerous if incorrectly administered. The best known are the buchu plants (*Agathosma* species) and the wilde-als (*Artemisia afra*). Buchu has been advocated for almost every ailment from cholera to contusions and was a widely used

household remedy in former times. Wilde-als was prescribed as a cure for coughs and colds and gastric problems.

### The Dell

The stream from Colonel Bird's bath flows through this area creating an ideal environment for the Coral Tree (*Erythrina* species), the common Cabbage Tree (*Cussonia spicata*) and the sweetly scented Wild Gardenia (*Gardenia thunbergii*). There are also several species of Yellowwood (*Podocarpus* species).

### Colonel Bird's bath

The oldest and to many the most attractive section of the Garden, this was built in about 1811 by Colonel Christopher Bird, Deputy Colonial

Secretary. It is roughly bird-shaped and made of Batavian bricks, fed by four pure ice cold springs.

The bath is the focal point of the Dell in which much use has been made of local stone, providing suitable habitats for many tree ferns (*Cyathus dregei*) and other shade loving plants such as *Plectranthus* and *Impatiens*. Some of the Yellowwoods are over 70 years old.

### Cycad Amphitheatre

The bath is overlooked by the impressive collection of cycads (*Encephalartos spp*). Palm-like in appearance, the ancestors of these date back unchanged to prehistoric times. They are often referred to as "living fossils", and were the first collection of plants to be established at Kirstenbosch.



## Erica garden

On the northern slopes a "fynbos garden" has been established where the emphasis is on different Erica species. They are social plants and grow among the many other components of the fynbos such as restios (Restionaceae) and proteas (Proteaceae). Most of the familiar Ericas such as *E. baueri*, *E. mammosa* and *E. versicolor* are grown here and provide colour and interest throughout the year. The natural outcrops of sandstone have been extended to accommodate this living collection.

## Main Lawn

In the winter and early spring the main lawn is starred with the colourful small pink suring (*Oxalis purpurea*) and later in the summer the vibrant blue of the *Agapanthus*

species is interspersed with the brilliant shades of *Strelitzia* (Bird of Paradise Flower). The lawn is of buffalo grass (*Stenotaphrum secundatum*) which is one of the best coastal area grasses. The several pools harbour Cape turtles and the rare transparent endemic fish species *Galaxias zebratus*, while on the surface float the delicate flowers of the beautiful blue water lilies (*Nymphaea carpensis*) and the rich pink blooms of *Crinum campanulatum*.

## J.W. Mathew's Rockery

One of the earliest developments built by and named in honour of ➡

(opposite page) Floral scene, Kirstenbosch

(below) Mathew's Rockery

(right) Cycads





the first Curator of Kirstenbosch, this is constructed of local sandstone and is used to display plants from the more arid regions. These include aloes, crassulas, euphorbias and many others.

## Protea Garden

The Silver Tree (*Leucadendron argenteum*) is a prominent feature of the landscape, with its silky silvery leaves.

In summer the tall blue spikes of the striking *Aristea major* frequently cover the area. A quick walk leads to the south-east end of the garden which is also a fynbos garden. The shrubs are established in beds which are arranged on the contour for comfortable walking. The Protea Garden is at its best in the winter when the proteas, leucadendrons and serrurias are in bloom, and it is a magical sight on early winter mornings to see the sugarbirds busy collecting nectar from *Protea compacta*, *P. examina* and

*P. aurea*. Also eye-catching at this time are the restios of *Elegia carpensis* and *Chondropetalum tectorum*.

Other fynbos plants are represented here, including *Watsonia* species, *Ursinia sericea*, the sweetly scented keurtjies (*Podalyria* spp) and *Virgilia oboides* (keurboom).

The pincushions provide a colourful display when they bloom in early spring and summer. Some of the more outstanding species are *Leucospermum reflexum*, *L. cordifolium* and *L. tottum*.

## Forest Walk

The path above the Protea Garden leads in a northerly direction through dense fynbos and crosses Nursery Stream which is frequently dry during the summer months. On the lower slopes of Castle Rock are fine specimens of *Protea nitida* and in winter observant visitors will be able to see a number of sundew flowers (*Drosera hilaris*) growing alongside the road.

At the approach to Skeleton Gorge the vegetation changes to coastal forest and this is the start of a shady walk through dappled sunlight. The road continues under the high canopy of mature forest species such as *Ocotea bullata* (Black Stinkwood), *Curtisia dentata* and *Podocarpus latifolius* (Real Yellowwood).

The trees are numbered with National Tree List numbers; there are 870 recorded species growing in this reserve area of Kirstenbosch.

The Forest Walk is 5 km long and takes the average walker about two hours to complete. There is also a shorter route of some 3.5 km. It is a refreshing interlude among tranquil surroundings with only bird song and the gurgle of mountain streams to break the silence. So far, 70 species of birds have been recorded and the occasional grybokkie and porcupine, as well as the more common dassie, can be seen. To stroll through this area of natural beauty is an uplifting experience and impresses the visitor with the magnitude and beauty of Kirstenbosch.

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# More Plant Profiles

from **Stephen RYAN**, of *Dicksonia Rare Plants*, Mount Macedon.

## Pearls before Gardeners

It always amazes me that the small genus *Exochorda* (Pearl Bushes) has only recently started to regain popularity. Fifteen years ago I was told about these plants and started to propagate them, but to my dismay no one would buy my stock. I suppose at that time I was ahead of the trend, as everyone was planting natives and deciduous shrubs were anathema to most gardeners. Yet one could still sell *Forsythia* and *Weigela*.

Pearl Bushes are just as easy to propagate and to grow on as these others and I think even more beautiful. At least in Victoria they have at last come into prominence due to the opening of the garden at Bolobek (probably one of our grandest). Anyone who has seen the two large specimens there, one on each side of a path, has quickly retreated to their cars and rushed up to see me to get their own.

The two species most likely to be met with in Australia are *E. giraldii* and *E. racemosa*. Both are beautiful large shrubs and very similar, so it doesn't matter too much which you get. The first one has slightly larger flowers and the second has a more spreading habit. Both are hardy and grow to about four metres; they will grow in any reasonable soil in a sunny aspect or even in part shade. No regular pruning is required, although an odd thinning of older wood won't hurt.

The only drawback when growing *Exochorda* is that it is definitely a plant for one season only as its leaves are at best ordinary and only turn a light yellow in autumn. If this worries you why not try planting a herbaceous climber at its feet which can clamber up and over it during summer and so extend the season of colour. Two sug-

gestions would be the perennial sweet pea (*Lathyrus latifolia*) in either its white or pink forms, or *Tropaeolum tuberosum* which produces lovely orange and yellow flowers in autumn.

I cannot finish this profile without mentioning that *Exochorda* also makes a good cut flower as it lasts well in a vase and doesn't really need the help of other blooms to make a statement.

## A polished performer

If the accompanying picture of *Prunus serrula* excites you, read on.

This lovely tree was introduced into England in 1908 by E.H. Wilson and received an Award of Merit in 1944 for its bark.

Like most of the *Prunus* species it is not particularly difficult to grow and will quite quickly make a small spreading tree, growing to about eight metres. Some pruning of lower branches is desirable to expose the stunning trunks, but apart from this no regular lopping is necessary.

It has narrow willow-like foliage of a mid-green colour and tiny white blossoms in spring with the new foliage. Neither flowers nor leaves are impressive but don't let that put you off; many trees are planted for their bark alone.

When selecting a site for this tree (commonly called Tibetan Cherry) make sure that the winter sun will catch the trunks and that it is close to a path so you can stroke it as you pass. Not only will you gain great pleasure from caressing its smooth sensuous limbs but if you are caught in the act you can quite rightly explain that rubbing the stems keeps them clean of moss and algae and makes the bark all the shinier.

The only real problem I have with Tibetan Cherry is the dreaded pear slug which can soon turn the leaves into grey skeletons. Although these pests will make the foliage look quite wretched they don't seem to retard growth much, so they are more a nuisance than a real problem. If you don't like using poisonous sprays and can't learn to ignore pear slug as I have, try covering the tree with dry dust (the insides of the vacuum cleaner or lime will do); pick a calm day then stand back and watch the slugs shrivel up as the dust dries their slimy little bodies.

Another point to keep in mind is that *P. serrula* is usually budded onto a normal cherry understock, so make sure when you plant it that the union is at ground level so that the different coloured bark is not visible.

I hope that you will now want to rush out and buy one of these magnificent trees, that could well turn a French polisher green with envy.

## Willing weepers

It is self evident, by the number of weeping cherries, birches, elms, etc that can be seen gracing gardens everywhere, that people love weeping trees. They are lovely when well placed as accent trees, but has it ever dawned on you how formal they tend to look? If formality is your intention, then plant away.

However, there are many trees that have pendulous branches but don't look like vegetable umbrellas with straight trunks and drooping branches shooting out from one point, and which can give a graceful and informal look to a garden. These are normally grafted low to the ground and have upward growing leaders whilst the ➡



laterals sweep towards the ground. Certainly they will grow a good deal taller than conventional weepers, but after all the spread of a tree is often more important than its height.

I would much prefer to plant say *Betula pendula* 'Tristis', with its narrow habit and drooping limbs than *B. pendula* 'Youngii' which looks more like a mushroom and tends to poke you in the eye as you pass.

Another tree that has this natural weeping form is *Fagus sylvatica* 'Pendula', the weeping beech. An aged specimen can truly be awe inspiring as I hope the accompanying picture will show. This particular specimen is growing at the famous Alton garden at Mount Macedon (unfortunately not often open to the public) and has been classified by the National Trust of Victoria. If your garden is not of the same scale as Alton don't be put off for

it has taken more than one human lifetime to reach its present size.

In spring the foliage is a most beautiful pale lime green that deepens only slightly during summer, and then turns a deep copper brown before falling. So although it doesn't produce showy flowers like a cherry (which only last for a week anyway) it does make a lovely year-round tree.

It is not a difficult tree to grow, but does prefer a sheltered garden and always does best in deep moisture-retentive soils.

## Where's there smoke

What difficulties we create when we use common names! For example, when you ask for a lily do you mean a *Lilium*, or a *Hosta* (Plantain Lily), an *Ixia* (Corn Lily), *Kniphofia* (Torch Lily) or a *Gloriosa* or a *Littonia* (both called Climbing Lilies)? There are probably at least a score of quite different plants all commonly called lilies.

The only reason I mention this is to lead me into the subject of my next profile. If you came into my nursery and asked for a Smoke Bush I wouldn't immediately think of *Conospermums* (the Western Australian Smoke Bush) as I don't grow them in my damp

climate. However, I might think of *Cotinus* from southern Europe, or *Bystropogon canariensis*, the Canary Island Smoke Bush). And this is the one whose praises I am going to sing.

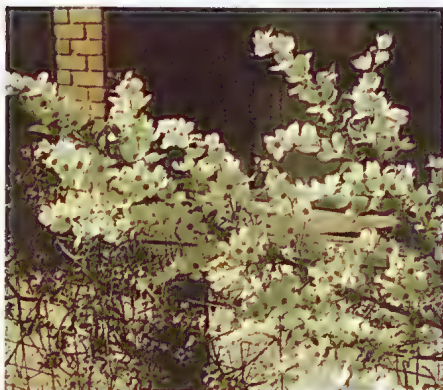
*Bystropogon* is a medium evergreen shrub to about two metres if left unpruned or one metre if heavily cut back after flowering each year. It is inclined to become leggy so this is desirable.

The small grey-green leaves and the flower heads have a strong aroma when crushed or when you brush past; to me they smell very like pennyroyal, but you may disagree.

The plant produces its fluffy grey-green flower heads in summer and autumn, and these can be picked for the house as fresh material or even dried (a squirt of hair spray will help to hold the lot together).

Any sunny aspect and a well drained soil should suit it and it would look at home in silver borders, as well as any cottage-style garden. One I once saw was planted just outside the front door of a house and at night, when the lights were on, it looked like a luminous cloud, definitely making it easier to find the door.

It is easy to strike from cuttings so once you have it you needn't stop at one.



(left top) *Exochorda gairaldii*



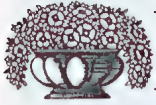
(left bottom) *Fagus sylvatica* 'Pendula'

(below) *Bystropogon canariensis*

(right) *Prunus serrula*







## NURSERY NOTES



### Belrose Nursery, Bundaleer Road, Belrose, NSW

When Michael Cooke was 16 he hacked a path through head-high *paspalum* to explore the grounds of the old "Mirrabooka Nursery" which his employer had just negotiated to buy. The ground was deeply gouged from many storms, pieces of ironstone littered the ground, and an ornamental grape on a rusted arch was the colour of ripe peaches. Through an opening he stumbled into the doorway of a dilapidated glasshouse.

Six years later the nursery was his. From the beginning he planned a different type of nursery and now, after eight years, a pattern has emerged and Belrose Nursery has a more individualistic look. Michael was not interested in the look of modern garden centres, so he has steered clear of specials, bright signs, bar coding and carousels. Instead, he aims to give customers inspiration in the form of displays, either in the gardens, arranged in pots, as a combination of co-ordination and contrast, or in the seasonal newsletter, "Nursery Rhymes".

The entrance is flanked by tall liquidambar, hoop pine and scribbly gums. To the right the path forks towards "Mirrabooka Cottage", the original home built in the 1950s. Here regulars may make tea and unwind with classical music, often with overtures from the chooks in the coop outside. Herb vinegars, iron work and original garden detail are arranged among antiques, memorabilia and old family photographs.

To the left the path divides towards the office, draped in a curtain of Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*) flanked by two enormous *Ficus hillii*. A box-edged garden in front is this season massed with *Coreopsis* 'Moonbeam', contrasting with *Salvia azurea* backed with the smokey leafed Plume Poppy



photo by Rowan Fotheringham

(*Macleaya microcarpa*). Early summer has the area blanketed in a cloak of jacaranda flowers.

As often as not, rather than the popular pink, blue and white colour schemes, Michael will have one of green euphorbias, sombre hued hellebores, subtle grey artemisias, curious arums and arisarums, spires of salvia and thistle-like globes of eryngium or artichoke. This rarely leads to fast sales, but develops a genuine interest in the diverse range that is lacking in most general nurseries.

Further down, below the grape covered arch, is a formal paved area, often featuring topiary or occasionally water plants in an old claw-footed tub.

The lichen-flecked timber lathed bush house is covered with decaying venetian blinds, retained as they allow a magnificent *Wistaria floribunda* *flore plena* and a gnarled *Fuchsia magellanica* 'Gracilis' to rest their old limbs.

The thick plantings provide the perfect habitat for a variety of small birds, especially insect eaters, so there is rarely any need to use insecticides.

Further along the main gravel path is a new construction, a double

seated arbour leading to a large herbaceous garden. One side is shaded by a huge weeping lilly pilli (*Waterhousea floribunda*), another side borders a drain and will feature bog plants while another is hot and dry, perfect for silver foliaged and Mediterranean plants.

About 60% of all perennials sold are grown either at the nursery or at Michael's home at Mangrove Mountain.

Although often identified as a "cottage nursery" Belrose Nursery is not limited to one particular style.

Last spring saw the first of a series of design workshops, quite different to the average garden class. Each participant's garden is discussed by the group so many different styles are covered. The emphasis is on colour, style and form, along with tips on using ornaments, maintenance and composting, all held very informally with frequent walks round the nursery.

"Nursery walks" are another popular activity. Small groups are taken through the gardens with attention being paid to smaller details like moss on pathways, patterns in bark, scented foliage and less spectacular flowers, finishing with a discussion over coffee and pastries.

Michael says he has noticed an increase in the number of competent gardeners as well as a desire to experiment. Most are craving the plants and the knowledge to enrich their gardens and their lives. In response to this demand, Belrose Nursery will strive to provide a stimulating selection of plants.

*Note: For free quarterly newsletter "Nursery Rhymes" write or phone Michael Cooke MAIH, Belrose Nursery, Bundaleer Rd, Belrose, NSW 2085; tel (02) 450.1484.*





# Sunnybrae

*Gail THOMAS visits a restored cottage at Birregurra, in Victoria's Western District, now used as a function centre and for intermittent cooking courses.*

**A**t first glance, as one enters the tree-lined driveway, Sunnybrae appears to be a typical small country cottage set in picturesque surroundings. But on further investigation it is obvious that this country haven has more to offer than first impressions suggest.

Diane Garrett purchased the 12 hectare property in 1976. The 1868 cottage, built from local Birregurra bricks by "Brickie" Pell (other examples of his work can be seen at Ripplevale and the Native Youth Hotel) was derelict, but Diane was inspired by its potential.

The cottage is to be registered by the National Trust and Diane has researched its history and its previous owners, finding a family tree that reaches back to Scotland. It

is believed that the garden originally extended to the road.

The concept of creating a small reception centre for quality functions, Sunday lunch for the general public, and running small intermittent courses has now become a reality for Diane and her partner, George Biron.

George came to Australia from Hungary in 1957, after the revolution. His love of cooking was inherited from his mother who had been a pastrycook with a shop in St Kilda. As a self-taught chef, George's first cooking job was in a Chinese restaurant in Rabaul. In the 1970s, with partner Jeremy Gerrand, he opened "Boojums" in Rathdowne Street, Carlton, and later leased the Grace Darling Hotel in Collingwood.

After travelling overseas a number of times and cooking in London, as well as in Queenscliff and Lorne, George taught trade apprentices at the Gordon Technical College in Geelong.

He met Diane about 14 years ago, when he was displaying her artwork at his restaurant in Collingwood. Diane was, and still is, an art teacher in Colac. George moved to Sunnybrae in 1983.

Extension works began in 1990 and while it was expected that these would take 12 weeks, they were finally completed 12 months later!

George endeavoured to use local tradesmen for the extensions, which were designed to maintain basic proportions. Recycled materials were used as far as possible; the



casement windows came from a wrecker's yard and the Otway beech wood for the dining tables was found at the local mill. George believes this is the last of this wood, as the trees can no longer be cut. The tables were made by a local carpenter and feature a stone centre, which adds contrast of texture as well as being practical for hot dishes.

As well as a teaching kitchen, where George can cater for ten students for "hands-on" classes, there are two dining areas which can seat up to 80 people. These areas can also be used for conferences, conventions or seminars.

George's ideal of a place in the country in a non-stressful environment, where people can learn from skilled professionals, be they butchers, chefs, cheesemakers, bakers or gardeners, is attracting much interest.

Sunnybrae's kitchen has been specifically designed as a "quiet" kitchen with an environment which minimises the stressful aspects so often associated with commercial kitchens. Bright gold floor tiles reflect the colour of the wattles outside and the open outlook of the garden with its local birdlife is more inspirational than stressful!

Likewise the dining areas have relaxing garden views, where parrots feast on the cotoneaster berries and sheep wander near the dam a little further beyond. The atmosphere of

dining in a private home (which Sunnybrae is) is reflected by the warm and yet professional attention in classy but not intimidating surroundings. Diane's artwork, including paintings, platters, vases and screens are also a feature throughout. The montage screens, created from thousands of pasted images, all have themes, depicting gardens or art reproductions, with the main emphasis on floral designs.

Ample accommodation in the district ensures that those planning an extended stay in the region are well catered for, and with the local bluestone church nearby George says you don't have to be a squatter to have a true country wedding!

Sunnybrae is licensed and features wines from the surrounding district; it also offers BYO facilities. The Sunday lunch menu changes weekly, and regional specialities such as abalone and hare feature along with produce from local growers. Sunnybrae's own garden provides flavours from the herb garden, while elder, olive and bay trees, along with gooseberries, rhubarb and other vegetables will undoubtedly make their contributions.

George relates the parallels of living at Birregurra with his father's life in Hungary, where his small farm was the same distance from town as Sunnybrae is from Birregurra, and coincidentally the farm, like

Sunnybrae, was next to a cemetery! George wonders if the bricked plots of vegetable garden were unconsciously inspired from the cemetery next door.

Overseeing his domain among the plants, Slug, the garden cat, shows his seniority, yet despite a mature age of around 16, actively contributes by being one of the resident mice catchers as well as offering a friendly greeting to those admiring the cottage-style garden around the house.

But watch out for Iris, found as an abandoned kitten by Diane while digging up iris rhizomes (hence the name). Iris is extremely protective of her territory and her intimidating attitude, accompanied by a few threatening hisses, would have any self respecting mouse heading for cover as well as letting any human visitors know whose domain they were trespassing in.

The garden features lavenders, geraniums, daisies and roses as well as seasonal displays of marigolds, iris, borage, daffodils and poppies. A special highlight are the echiums, both the pink *E. wildpretii* and the purple *E. piniana*.

Three thousand trees have been planted on the property and in the future a more extensive orchard adjacent to the dam will supplement the garden produce.

Diane and George have created a haven with warm and friendly hospitality, where locals can come or show visitors what this historic region has to offer.

Sunnybrae offers a delightful interlude for those wishing to escape the commercialism of the cities for this peaceful country setting; a perfect setting for a garden seminar!



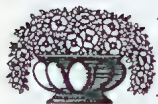
*Sunnybrae, Cape Otway Road,  
Birregurra, Vic. 3242. Phone and  
fax (052) 36.2276.*

(opposite page) Sunnybrae cottage

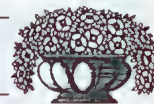
(left) Diane and George at their Otway beech wood table, with Diane's screen and platter.







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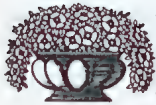
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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS, Home & Overseas

### FEBRUARY-MARCH

**29th Feb to 8th March:** Art Exhibition, "Forest, Fruit and Flowers", sponsored by the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney, at Lion Gate Lodge, Mrs Macquarie's Rd, Sydney, 10am to 3pm daily. Features the work of Patrick Shirvington, Charlotte Thoday and potters Janna Ferris and Pat Cahill.

### MARCH

**7th to 15th March:** Garden Week, Fitzroy Gardens, Melbourne.

**14th and 15th March:** NSW Begonia Society's Annual Exhibition, Harvey-Lowe Pavilion, Castle Hill Showground, Carrington Road, Castle Hill, 10am to 4pm. Wide range of begonias on sale.

### APRIL

**4th and 5th April:** Mudjee Rose Festival. Enquiries to Ken Langton, (063)72.2555.

**10th to 12th April:** open weekend at The Perfumed Garden, Derril Rd, Moorooduc, Vic 3933, 9am to 5pm.

**10th and 11th April:** Garden Journal's tour to beautiful gardens in the Braidwood area — ring the office on (048) 61 4999.

**10th to 12th April:** International Primula Symposium, sponsored by the American Primrose Society, the Royal Horticultural Society and the Berry Botanical Garden of Portland; Portland, Oregon, USA. Featuring 10 international speakers from Europe, Japan and USA. Further information from Ann Lunn, 6620 NW 271st Ave, Hillsboro, OR 97124, USA.

**15th April to 11th October:** Floriade 1992, Holland.

**20th April to 12th October:** Ameriflora '92, Columbia Park, Ohio.

**25th and 26th April:** Chrysanthemum Society of Victoria Championship Show, National Rhododendron Garden, Georgian Rd, Olinda, Vic; 1pm to 4.30pm 25th, 10.30am to 4.30pm 26th.

**30th April to 16th May:** Tour arranged to visit Floriade 1992 in Holland; spend 4 days in Vienna — Lake Constance, and travel the Romantic Road through Germany to Holland. Join Tim and Keva North. Enquiries Australian Garden Journal (048)61.4999, or after hours (048)61.1884.

### MAY

**1st May to 27th Oct:** Garden Festival Wales, Ebbw Vale, Gwent, Wales; open 10am to 7pm May/Sept-Oct, 10am to 8pm June/July/Aug.

**3rd May:** OPCA Subscribers Group Autumn Tour to the Calluna Collection at Ferny Creek and the George Tindale Memorial Garden.

**9th and 10th May:** African Violet Association of Australia Inc Annual Show, Harvey Lowe Pavilion, Castle Hill Showground, Castle Hill, NSW; Sat. 1pm to 5pm, Sun. 10am to 5pm.

**12th to 15th and 17th to 20th May:** International Flower Bulbs Symposium, Poland and the Netherlands. Contact R. Bogers, Box 85, 260 AB Lisse, Netherlands.

**18th to 24th May:** Rhododendron Conference, Bad Zwischenahn, Germany. Contact Prof. W. Spethmann, Hanover University, Am-Steinberg 3, D-3203 Sarstedt, Germany.

**19th to 22nd May:** Chelsea Flower Show, in the grounds of the Royal Hospital Chelsea. 19th, 20th and 21st, RHS members only; open to non-members after 3.30pm 21st and 8am to 5pm 22nd. Tickets should be purchased in advance from Royal Horticultural Society, 80 Vincent Square, London SW1P 2PE; 24 hour information on (071)828.1744.

**21st to 24th May:** Festival of Herbs and Fragrance; four days of free lectures and demonstrations at The Fragrant Garden, Portsmouth Road, Erina, NSW.

**26th May:** OPCA Subscribers' Group Lecture "Abutilons" by Les Marshall, National Herbarium, Birdwood Ave, South Yarra, 7.30pm.

### JUNE

**6th to 10th June:** 1992 Pacific Rim International Horticultural Exhibition, Juan de Fuca Recreation Centre, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. Enquiries Rosamund McLean, 1022 Cook St, Victoria, BC V8V 3Z5, Canada.

### AUGUST

**8th to 11th Aug:** Hardware and Garden Show, Royal Exhibition Centre, Wayville, SA. Enquiries Geoff Millard, Exhibitions and Trade Fairs Pty Ltd, 6 Grenfell St, Kent Town, SA 5067; tel (08)362.9966; fax (08)362.9994.

**19th Aug:** OPCA Subscribers' Group AGM, including "Meet the Collectors, 'A Wealth of Antipodean Plants for OPCA Collections" by Rodger Elliot, and plant auction.

### SEPTEMBER

**1st to 4th Sept:** International Geranium Conference, Hans Christian Andersen Centre, Odense, Fyn, Denmark.

**25th to 28th Sept:** Third Australian International Herb Conference, Brisbane Boys' College, Kensington Terrace, Toowong, Qld. Enquiries Mrs Barbara Wickes, 26 Ripicola Place, Chapel Hill, Qld 4069; tel (07)378.2075.

**30th Sept to 3rd Oct:** Conference "The Culture of Landscape Architecture, EDGE TOO", organised by students from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and the University of Melbourne. Enquiries to the Convenors, Landscape Architecture Students Conference, Faculty of Environmental Design and Construction, RMIT, GPO Box 2476V, Melbourne, 3001; or School of Environmental Planning, University of Melbourne, Parkville, 3052.

*News items for inclusion in "Calendar of Events; Home and Overseas" must reach our editorial office by letter or fax no less than seven weeks before the first day of the month of issue.*





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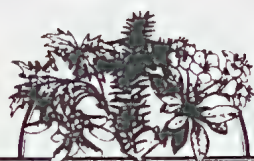
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**Editor**

**TIM NORTH**

**Art, Circulation and Subscriptions**

**ANN FOGARTY**

**National Advertising Director**

**KEVA NORTH**

**Advertising, Victoria and South  
Australia**

**Lesley de Meyrick,**

**17 Hampden Rd, Armadale, Vic 3143**  
**tel (03) 509.4484**

**Editorial Advisory Board**

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# Garden Journal

VOLUME 11 NO. 4: MAY — JULY 1992



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*Front cover: "Chaucer," a David Austin "old-world" style rose growing in the garden at  
Longford Hall, Tasmania. (see page 169)*  
*photo by Keva North*



## In Our Next Issue —

- The Garden Journal goes to the southern Mornington Peninsula, with a special visit to DELGANY COUNTRY HOUSE HOTEL at Portsea, as well as other gardens and places of interest in the district.
- Mary ELLIS takes us to CHURCHILL ISLAND, off the north-east tip of Phillip Island, with a garden planted mainly in the 1890s by a Mayor of Melbourne.
- Gordon COLLIER writes about his garden at TITOKI POINT, on New Zealand's North Island, regarded by many as one of New Zealand's finest private gardens.
- Nancy BECKHAM writes on ORNAMENTAL GRASSES, Jock THOMPSON on some of the lesser known BIRCHES, Gail THOMAS on some of the interesting and unusual edible plants she grows in her own garden in Geelong, and Helene WILD on how she grows a range of native orchids under shade-cloth in her Melbourne garden.
- Nathan PERKINS contributes the second of his articles on the techniques of drystone wall making; this deals with new retaining walls.
- plus the usual book reviews, Garden Cuttings and much more —

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issue of

*THE AUSTRALIAN  
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## *Follow the Crowd — or Find Your Own Way?*

Hugh Johnson, whose alter ego is "Tradescant" of *The Garden*, some years ago had some cogent comments to make on gardening magazines, as he has had, over the years, cogent comments to make on a number of topics.

The occasion was the demise of the 87-year old *Popular Gardening* magazine. Television, he claimed, was one culprit because it had robbed magazines of much of their advertising. The producers of chemicals, mowers and the like "seduce, cajole and if necessary bully inexperienced home owners into buying expensive garden gear. This is the audience that believes there is a chemical, a mechanical or an electrical answer to every problem; they have yet to learn about and glory in plants' sheer perversity".

Another reason, Hugh Johnson thought, might be that magazines have lost their way; publishers are urged to follow the crowd and appeal to the same target as the big advertisers.

He is probably right, but there is a Catch 22 situation here. Every magazine needs advertising; cannot survive without it, in fact. But advertising managers are concerned only with circulation figures, which means following the crowd.

Hugh Johnson goes on to say that a successful magazine has to have an ethos; it is that which attracts its intended readers and possibly repels others. A strong ethos, one can argue, is the only way to compensate for not following the crowd.

Back in 1969 the late Professor H.B. Tukey, in an address to the Colonial Williamsburg Garden Symposium in the USA, had this to say: "I propose that we continue to tell novices how to plant petunias and to inform connoisseurs about the esoteric flora of Australia. But I strongly urge American horticulture to devote an equal portion of its energies to create and preserve the kind of world in which the petunia will grow".

There are, probably, enough magazines that meet the first of these needs; time may show that there is at least one too many. We can meet the second need, but only in part; there just aren't enough people in Australia to make such a publication viable.

But what of the third, the creation and preservation of a world in which petunias will grow?

This is the hardest gap to fill. The conservation lobby is a veritable Tower of Babel and one does not wish, consciously, to add to the confusion. But new trends in gardening and garden design are emerging. Horticulture, of which "gardening" (by which we generally mean home gardening) is but one segment, is learning new responsibilities, finding new horizons. Tissue culture is coming to the rescue of hitherto endangered species; we are learning the meaning of integrated pest control which no longer depends solely on toxic chemicals; we are learning how to make, and keep, gardens that do not need huge quantities of water. In short, we are learning, rather belatedly, not just how to grow petunias but how to create a world in which they will continue to grow.

There is surely enough in that for an ethos that will compensate us for not following the crowd. We will continue to resist that temptation, of taking the easier road, and hope that enough people will follow us along our own way.

**TIM NORTH**





## P R O F I L E S



**NATHAN PERKINS** is a dry stone waller who works and instructs on dry stone walling throughout Victoria and the southern States. He studied with the Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain (DSWA), working with master craftsmen throughout the United Kingdom. During this time he sat the various levels of certification that the DSWA demands in order to become a master craftsman. Having successfully completed these exams Nathan is the only qualified master craftsman dry stone waller outside the United Kingdom.

**JOHN ZWAR** became a trainee at the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide after leaving Urrbrae Agricultural High School, gaining the Higher Certificate in Ornamental Horticulture in 1971.

In 1972 he started work with the Electricity Trust of South Australia at Leigh Creek Coalfield in the State's arid north as Horticultural Officer, advising on appropriate plants and techniques and re-establishing a nursery there.

In 1974 he became Curator of the National Botanic Garden of Papua New Guinea in Lae, and remained there for a year until the position was localised. He then moved to Port Augusta to become the city's first Superintendant of Parks and Gardens. This involved establishing a Parks and Gardens Department and the beautification of the city by large scale tree planting and parkland developments, no easy task in a area with an

average annual rainfall of 230 mm, very hot windy summers, poor sandy and often salt affected soil. In 1978 John was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to study parks and gardens in low rainfall areas in South America, USA, Israel and South Africa. During this period he instigated the proposal for an Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden on a site at Port Augusta West, and since then has vigorously promoted this development.

In 1987, after more than 13 years in Port Augusta, he moved to Roxby Downs, a new mining town in the arid north of South Australia (average annual rainfall 150 mm) and took up the position of Supervisor of Works and Gardens with the municipal authority. In 1989 he was awarded the Order of Australia medal for service to the community through tree planting and parkland development. Shortly afterwards he was offered the position of Horticulturist with Western Mining Corporation's Olympic Dam Operations, which he currently holds.

He has been a member of various horticultural societies and clubs, and formed the Port Augusta Garden Club and The Friends of the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden, Port Augusta, Inc. For five years he was a member of the Northern Consultative Committee of the South Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service. He has presented papers at various seminars and conferences in Australia, Chile, USA and Israel.



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**REGISTRATION FORM ON PAGE 195**





# Maples — off the beaten track

by Arnold J. TEESE

When most of our customers refer to maples they are talking about the so-called “Japanese Maples”, *Acer palmatum*.

The term “Japanese”, being applied to but one species from that country, is somewhat misleading as there are some 22 species, according to the latest information, native to Japan.

Maples occur naturally right round the Northern Hemisphere, even to North Africa (*A. monspessulanum*). Different taxonomists have different ideas as to the total number of species but in the latest articles there would seem to be approximately 110; 12 in Europe, 9 in North America, 73 in China and 98 in other parts of Asia. Of course, some species overlap and are widely spread in the Euro-Asian land mass.

Many forms of *A. palmatum* have been named, ranging from finely divided leaves to much larger leafed

types, some weeping forms, some dwarfs and others with variegated foliage. These are very well described and illustrated in John Vertree's outstanding book “Japanese Maples”.

Little has been written about the other maples and their cultivars; many of these are hardier in warmer areas and quite a number are very beautiful trees. Fortunately a book covering the entire maple genus will be available in the near future, compiled and written by several acknowledged authorities.

For some years we have been collecting the most interesting and attractive forms of maples that we are able to obtain. Some of these only suit the cooler areas while others have proved to be quite hardy inland and some in the sub-tropics.

*A. buergerianum*, the Trident Maple, is used frequently in bonsai. There are several interesting forms but *A. buergerianum* ‘Mino

Yatsabusa’, with three-lobed leaves, the centre one quite elongated, is probably the best. Unfortunately it is extremely difficult to propagate and is seldom available. This form is quite dwarf and has brilliant gold and red autumn foliage.

The so-called “Snake Bark” group includes several species with striped green and white bark and excellent autumn colour. All are hardy small trees. They include *A. davidii*, *A. laxiflorum*, *A. capillipes*, and several others. Also in this group is *A. crataegifolium* of Japanese origin which has very small dainty leaves. A variegated form has recently become available, *A. crataegifolium* ‘Veitchii’. The leaves are beautifully blotched with pink, cream and green.

*A. cappadocicum* which extends from the Caucasus to western China is an upright small tree and has produced a beautiful golden leafed form, *A. cappadocicum* ‘Aureum’.



*A. circinatum*, the Vine Maple of western USA and Canada, is in the same group as *A. palmatum*. A dwarf form, *A. circinatum* 'Little Gem' and a cut-leaf form 'Monroe' are both attractive plants.

A species very new to cultivation is *A. elegantulum* from China. The quite large elegant three-lobed leaves are at first light bronze in the spring, changing to salmon and orange-red in autumn.

*A. japonicum* is also related to *A. palmatum* but has larger leaves. A number of attractive forms are available, the best being *A. japonicum* 'Aconitifolium' with finely divided leaves and excellent orange and red autumn colours. *A. japonicum* 'Vitifolium', as the name suggests has vine-like foliage which turns bright red in autumn.

Some 12 years ago I attempted to cross *A. palmatum* 'Dissectum Atropurpureum' with *A. japonicum* 'Aconitifolium'. I do not believe that the cross succeeded but one seedling turned out to be a dwarf with very finely divided leaves which have the

most brilliant scarlet and gold autumn colour. We named it *A. japonicum* 'Fairy Lights' and the original plant is still only one and a half metres and stiffly upright — a wonderful piece of luck!

A close relative of *A. japonicum* is *A. sieboldianum*. The variety 'Atarvi' has very large leaves and is one of the best autumn coloured maples available. Every shade from creamy yellow to brilliant red can be seen on this small tree in early May.

Another relative is the "Full Moon" maple, 'Aureum', formerly *A. japonicum* 'Aureum'. This variety has round leaves with many lobes and is gold in spring, light green in summer and gold with some red tips in autumn. Requires shade in all but the coolest climates.

*A. saccharum*, the Sugar Maple, from north-east USA and Canada, is a large tree suitable for shade, with the bonus of brilliant autumn colour.

*A. platanoides*, the Norway Maple, is a marvellous shade tree for all but the very small garden, including farms. All forms are hardy in most

climates. The best known is *A. platanoides* 'Crimson King' which holds the port wine colour throughout spring, summer and autumn. A cut-leaf form, *A. platanoides* 'Lorbergii', is green in spring and summer but turns to a beautiful butter yellow in autumn. The "Eagle's Claw"

Maple, *A. platanoides* 'Laciniata', is appropriately named as the leaves really do look like an eagle's claw; the autumn colour is yellow-gold. There is also a variegated form, *A. platanoides* 'Drummondii', which has been occasionally available for many years and is an excellent smaller growing tree.

A most unusual species from China is *A. pentaphyllum*. The leaves are composed of five grass-like leaflets joined only at the base, giving an almost bamboo-like appearance. The plant is perfectly hardy, colours to soft shades of yellow, buff and pink in autumn and at all times has a light, graceful appearance.

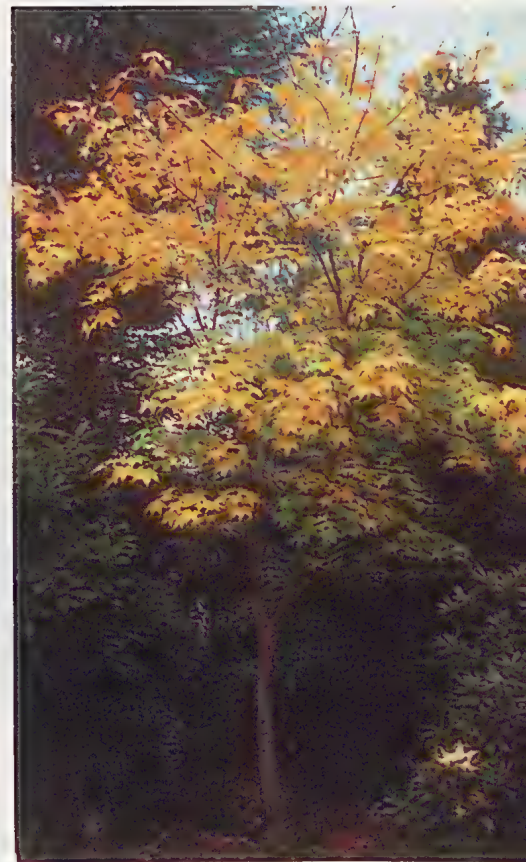
*continued on page 170*

(opposite page) *Acer platanoides* 'Lorbergii'

(above right) *Acer cappadocicum* 'Aureum'

(below) *Acer sieboldianum* 'Atarvi'

*photos courtesy of Yamina Rare Plants*







# *Changing Fashions in Roses over the Years*

by *Deane M. ROSS*



**W**hen you look at a simple five-petalled wild or species rose, it is hard to imagine that these were the originators of our modern roses, roses that we know as large, double and incredibly robust. But roses have been steadily developing, with the aid of dedicated breeders and plantsmen, for the past 200 years from a basic selection of only a dozen or more species roses.

At first, double forms that spontaneously occurred in the wild were transferred into the gardens. Variations such as the mossing effect on the calyx and upper stem (the Moss roses), had a period of popularity. The next improvement was the introduction in the early 1800s of the recurrent flowering China roses into the breeding programme. The range of available colours also expanded with the introduction of the China roses, giving roses the bright clear red and soft yellow genes.



With the advent of the stout, bushy Hybrid Tea class late in the 19th century, plant shapes and hardiness improved. At the turn of the century we saw the introduction of the bright yellow roses, which led quickly into orange and autumn colours. Brighter roses were to follow by the middle of the century. A chance mutation of a humble little polyantha rose called 'Baby Chateau' gave us the cyanadine gene which enabled breeders to develop the likes of the spectacular 'Super Star'.

At the same time, other less obvious attributes were being developed in the modern roses. Slowly and steadily the general hardiness of roses has improved. Disease resistance and frost hardiness are important to the breeder, together with a plant that is handsome and well clothed. Possibly the most important improvement has been the rapidity with which roses now repeat their flowering. The modern rose is scarcely without blooms from spring to autumn, with one flush of blossom following the next.

The range of colours, shapes and growth habits of present day roses is now so extensive that a gardener can choose a rose for almost any purpose that they require.

I became interested in roses in the 1950s, and being in the business of supplying rose plants to the gardening public, I have seen some interesting changes in the public's preferences in the intervening years.

During the 1950s the traditional Hybrid Tea held sway, with its large formal bloom. 'Peace' had just been introduced, joining 'McGredy's Yellow'

in that colour group. 'Ena Harkness' and 'Tassin' joined 'Crimson Glory' as leading reds. 'Patrick Anderson' and 'Mrs George Geary' were the leading pinks and 'Mme Jules Bouche' was winning prizes as a white.

By the 1960s the floribundas became the new sensation of the rose world, with 'Fashion' (salmon), 'Pinocchio' (pink), 'Goldilocks' (yellow), 'Spartan' (orange) and 'Masquerade' (red and yellow) dominating the selections. Overseas, especially in Europe and USA their popularity soared, but Australia did not embrace them so enthusiastically, although the floribundas accounted for about a quarter of our sales. In the same period, some excellent natural climbers were introduced and became steady favourites. 'Golden Showers', 'Danse de Sylphes', 'Meg', and 'Blossomtime' were popular then and are still in demand. A small selection of miniature roses were available, but were generally smaller than today's miniatures. 'Marilyn' (pink), 'Perle de Montserrat' and 'Midget' were indeed truly miniature.

By the 1970s the brilliant coloured varieties had arrived, the most notable being the bright orange-scarlet 'Super Star'. Bright bicolours were popular, 'Cleopatra' and 'Olympic Torch' joining the older 'Tzigane'. Breeders had begun crossing the larger hybrid teas with the floribundas in order to use the best features of both classes. Floribundas, it should be noted, have brought a lot of new features into rose breeding. Much of the free-flowering influence of the modern roses came from the floribundas and, of course, their clustering habit. It is not generally appreciated that 'Lavender Pinocchio' was one of the first "blue" roses, and that 'Masquerade' introduced the changing colour, or "suntanning" effect. Floribundas like 'Tantau's Triumph', 'Independence', and 'Floradora' were some of the first brilliant red roses. 'Imp' was probably one of the first margined roses that eventually led to 'Silver Lining' and 'Princesse de Monaco'. It is not surprising then that a class loosely called HT type floribundas became popular. 'Daily Sketch', 'Sweet Repose' and

'Elizabeth of Glamis' were such roses, and prompted many nurseries to catalogue all of their bush roses in one section, for it became virtually impossible to decide which was a HT and which a floribunda. It made much more sense to accept the emergence of the new class, and list everything under the heading "bush roses".

The most notable trend in the 1980s was the spectacular rise in popularity of miniatures. The USA, in particular, took them to their hearts, and records show that some years as many miniatures were introduced as the combined number of all other classes of roses. These roses could be grown easily from cuttings and so could be passed from one keen gardener to the next. Unfortunately, no significant improvements came out of most of these and many were duplications of other miniatures.

Approaching the 1990s it was possible to see public tastes shifting once more. The bright and novel colours have been discarded in favour of the softer and subtly shaded roses. Pink became popular again, together with soft apricot, salmon and copper tones.

Although the high-pointed-centre rose is still the typical choice for most people as we move into the 1990s there is a substantial number of people appreciating the old-world style roses that Englishman David Austin, and others, are breeding. Meillands in France have produced instant favourites in 'Queen Adelaide' (Meirvildo), 'Pierre de Ronsard' (Meivoilin) and 'Seduction' (Meibeaussai). Speaking with their principal breeder, Jacques Mouchotte, recently, I asked how long they had been breeding towards the old-world style roses, to which he replied that a certain number of that style are continually coming through in their trials, quite spontaneously, but in view of the recent popularity of this style they look favourably on them. In the past such "deformities" would have been discarded.

As gardens become smaller, the demand for smaller plants has correspondingly increased. Not miniatures, but lower growing bushes, ➤

*(top left) 'Madam President'; soft pastel colours have now replaced the more flamboyant effects.*

*(top right) 'Edelweiss'; gardeners are using roses more for landscaping and bedding effects rather than for cutting.*

*(left) 'Masquerade' was appropriately named as it was the first popular rose to change colour upon opening. Now this is a common feature.*

*photos courtesy of Ross Roses*



suiting for rows and borders. 'Amber Queen' has won several major awards, 'Fruitee' (Meifructoz) has replaced the famous 'Charleston', while 'Edelweiss' (creamy-white), a relatively unknown rose for many years, has now become one of our most sought after low roses; 'Marlena' (deep red) has never been bettered as a very low borderer.

When travelling in England and other cooler climates that have shorter growing periods, it is obvious that our roses in Australia grow much higher, often double the size. Consequently, we see the blossoms of tall growing roses on the skyline with the beauty of the blooms pointing heavenward. It is largely for this reason that the lower growing varieties are so much more appealing and practical here.

Smaller growing climbers are also in demand. Growing climbers over arches and bowers, training them around pillars and tripods and covering small sections of fences and walls are popular uses. Each climber has its own natural amount of vigour and it is a futile exercise to try and cut down a vigorous climber to fit a small space. Many small climbers exist, including several "old world" varieties. 'Buff Beauty' (buff), 'Cornelia' (salmon), 'Kathleen Harrop' (pale pink),

'Zepherine Drouhin' (cerise pink), are early varieties; 'Climbing Pinkie', 'Climbing China Doll', 'Summer Snow' (white) and 'Pierre de Ronsard' (pale tones) are more recent, excellent small climbers.

Ground cover climbers have been in existence for many years. However the past five years has seen a wonderful new selection of more free flowering and more compact growing ground covers, and I am sure that more and better ones are being bred for the future.

Standard roses (or "stem" roses to avoid confusion) were popular in the first half of the century. Gradually they slipped from favour until they represented only about 5% of our sales. Now they are climbing back into popularity. Perhaps it is because of the trend towards cottage gardens — they enable people to plant more beneath them when space is scarce. Today's stem roses are often floribundas, for they make a more colourful display, and the head is usually neater and more compact.

Two additional factors have steadily become apparent in recent introductions — greater resistance to disease and quicker repeat of the blooms. These factors cannot be considered changes in fashion or taste, but

nevertheless have contributed to making roses easier to grow and better value in the garden as a landscape display. In fact, home gardeners seem to be paying more attention to the decorative effect of roses in the garden and less emphasis on the flower for cutting purposes. Perhaps modern roses, with their circular outline, high spiralling centre and large size, are being taken for granted and we cease to appreciate their monotonous perfection. Instead, we are starting to look for informality and variation.

No one can tell what new trends the future will bring to the rose world. However, the roses for the beginning of next century are already in the breeders' seedling beds. It takes ten years for new seedlings to be selected, tested and launched on to the market. The breeder can guess what will be the public's preference by that time, but we can be sure that fashions, or more correctly trends, will continue to change steadily towards a wider range and more variable coloured roses in the future.



**Note:** Deane Ross, and his wife Maureen, are proprietors of Ross Roses, of Willunga, South Australia.

## Maples, continued from page 167

For many years we have seen *A. negundo* in both the golden and white variegated forms, often referred to as "the Ghost Maple". Recently *A. negundo* 'Flamingo' has become available. This variety has a beautiful pink toning to all young growth and like its predecessors is perfectly hardy even in areas such as Shepparton and Mildura.

A newly imported species related to *A. negundo* is *A. cissifolium* var *Henryii*, which 1700Z f bronze-red young foliage and masses of bright red hanging seeds in spring and early summer. This is a hardy species of great merit.

Sometimes bark is underestimated as a landscape feature. A

small group of maples with leaves composed of three leaflets which colour beautifully in autumn also has the attr1700Z%oon of peeling paper-like bark. *A. griseum* has mahogany coloured peeling bark which looks like large sheets of paper. *A. triflorum* has bark reminiscent of paper bark Melaleucas.

It is not well known that there are several evergreen maples, but only two seem to be available at present. *A. oblongum* is almost un-maple like small tree with oval leaves and no lobes. The young growth is rather like gum-tips. The other occasionally available species is *A. craibianum* which has large tri-lobed leaves. The young growth is a beautiful soft red.

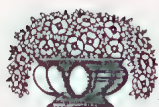
The two preceding species are well adapted to sub-tropical areas as well as to cool temperate ones. A fine specimen of *A. craibianum* can be seen at the Rhododendron Park at Wollongong.

Another maple with distinct leaves is *A. carpinifolium*. The leaves are so similar to the Hornbeam, *Carpinus betulus*, that one could be forgiven for a wrong identification, but this species has the typical winged seeds of all the maples.

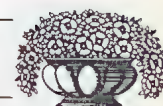


**Note:** Arnold Teese is a principal of Yamina Rare Plants, of Monbulk, Victoria. See ad inside front cover for details.





## BOOK REVIEWS



### *A World of Ferns*

by Josephine A. Camus, A. Clive Jermy and Barry A. Thomas;  
published by Natural History  
Museum Publications and  
available from Promotions  
Department, Natural History  
Museum Publications, Cromwell  
Road, London SW7 5BD;  
approximately \$26 plus freight.  
reviewed by Tim North

Whether one is a fern enthusiast or not (and I have to confess that I am not) this is a fascinating book if for no other reason than for its stunning photographs of different types of ferns in many parts of the world, and its entree into the amazingly diverse world of ferns, club mosses and horsetails. There is the mist forest at 2,900 metres on Volcan Barva, Costa Rica, evening on Loch Awe in Scotland, whose shoreline is dominated by aquatic ferns; *Blechnum cycadifolium* on the seaward slopes of the South Pacific Robinson Crusoe Island and the simply magnificent

Wardian Case containing ferns at the Peoples' Palace Museum in Glasgow.

Ferns from tropical forests, wetlands, temperate zones, mountain summits and even polar regions.

The fossil record is an absorbing story; how 45 metre high club mosses formed vast areas of closed forest 300 million years ago, and river banks were fringed with impenetrable thickets of giant horsetails.

Josephine Camus and Clive Jermy are members of the Botany Department of the Natural History Museum and Barry Thomas is Keeper of Botany at the National Museum of Wales as well as President of the British Pteridological Society.

### *The Garden Within*

by Joan Law-Smith; published  
by Florilegium Press, 1991;  
recommended retail price \$39.95  
reviewed by John Patrick

Surely no Australian gardener needs to be told about Bolobek, for it is the supreme Australian garden in a cool-temperate tradition where Joan

Law-Smith has gardened for the last 20 years. All of her friends were saddened last year at the news that Bolobek with its lovely garden was for sale, that Sir Robert and Lady Law-Smith were to move to a new home and that the garden at Bolobek would no longer be graced by their care and attention. While Sir Robert and Lady Law-Smith have moved elsewhere, Bolobek remains unsold and garden enthusiasts have been able to visit again this year to remind them of how beautiful the garden is.

One of these visitors was a colleague of mine visiting for the first time. "How would you sum up the pleasures of Bolobek?" I asked. His reply was in a few words; "An overriding sense of serenity". It is this exact quality which is apparent in Joan Law-Smith's book, for there is about it and the story she tells a wonderful serenity which assists in recalling the wonder of a visit to Bolobek.

I have been fortunate on numerous occasions to visit with student groups, with friends and enthusiasts and to be able to rekindle that original pleasure to be had as if visiting Bolobek for the first time. In part one's pleasure lies in being guided by Joan Law-Smith herself and this book's greatest delight is that it recaptures these occasions so that it is as if the reader is receiving a personal guided tour through the garden; in part it is in enjoying a garden freed from so much of the trivia which seems to have infiltrated our gardens. In this I refer not so much to the plants, though here Bolobek benefits from avoiding the demand for diversity that permeates so many gardens, but rather the masses of garden ephemera that crowds gardens today. Sundials, arbours, seats, ducks on walks across paths and signs that warn of them, all these seem to me to detract from the simple beauty of a garden. Show slides of Bolobek and one's audience enthuses at its restraint and simplicity, yet that same audience finds it impossible to achieve a similar effect in their own garden.

Bolobek is the product of such a remarkable discipline and restraint and it is these qualities which permeate the story in this book.

The book provides a superb reminder of visits to Bolobek for here are the same images and moods that were encountered on visits. Perhaps more importantly it is

the account of how these images and moods were created. More than simply relying on photographs to reinforce our experience of visiting Bolobek, Joan Law-Smith furnishes us with her own experiences and attitudes about her garden, allowing us to understand much of her garden philosophy and advising us of many of her practical steps by which effects are achieved. I especially enjoyed the way in which garden history was woven together with plant descriptions and cultivation notes to achieve a fascinating read for beginners and advanced gardeners alike.

Finally, while the text is Joan Law-Smith's, I am sure she would be the first to recognise the contributions of Barbara Strange, her photographer, and Alison Forbes, her designer, who have made such a telling contribution to its overall feel and appearance. Alison has now, I think, designed all four of Joan Law-Smith's books and each has a feel and appearance which makes them comfortable to read and a delight to hold. *The Garden Within* is a valuable contribution to Australia's garden literature and an invaluable addition to the bookshelf of every gardener and garden lover.

### *The Strangest Plants in the World*

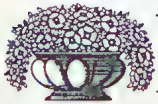
by Professor S. Talalaj, D. and J. Talalaj; published by Hill of  
Content Publishing Co. Ltd,  
1991; recommended retail price  
\$24.95

reviewed by Tim North

Most of us, from time to time, find a curious, even morbid, fascination with the bizarre side of nature, the mystical and the mythical.

In this small paperback book the authors, husband, wife and son, have brought together an extraordinary number of the plant world's oddities, as well as myths and superstitions about the powers of certain plants. There are gruesome accounts of plants being used in human sacrifice, plants with hallucinatory powers, plants that kill — like the deadly Upas Tree of Java whose resin was used on poison arrows; evil plants like the "Shameless Mushroom"





## BOOK REVIEWS



(*Phallus impudicans*) whose appearance was considered to be so obscene that decent people could not bring themselves to look upon it. There are giant plants, very old plants like the Bristlecone Pine in East Nevada that is believed to be almost 5,000 years old yet only 12 metres high; curious desert plants that have adapted to their harsh environment in several different ways; plants that consume insects and, perhaps the oddest of all, the huge *Rafflesia arnoldii* of Borneo and Sumatra that has neither stem, leaves nor root, just one huge flower that can measure one metre across and weigh up to 7 kg.

The authors hope that readers of this book will learn to have a greater appreciation of the plant kingdom and from that will support the preservation of their ever-diminishing natural habitats, both tropical forests and elsewhere. A most praiseworthy reason for writing a book and one which should be good enough to make many people want to read it.

### *Garden Secrets*

by Marlyn Pidgeon, photographs and illustrations by Noeline Miller; published by Simon and Schuster, 1991; recommended retail price \$19.95

reviewed by Tim North

The sub-title of this book is "successful gardeners show how they cope with the variable Australian climate". This may be a trifle misleading for all the gardeners live and garden in one particular part of Australia, namely the New England district of northern New South Wales.

Certainly New England has a harsh climate, one of extremes from prolonged drought to severe frost. Yet it is an area noted for good gardens — this book describes more than 40 — which says much for the skill, fortitude, patience and in many cases the innovative techniques of its gardeners. Shelter and the provision of adequate water are preoccupations shared by all, and these apply to many other parts of Australia.

It is interesting, however, to note many divergent views; obviously what works for one does not work for another;

gardening is, after all, largely a matter of trial and error. But there will be few who will not learn something from this book, wherever they may live. It is, moreover, an enjoyable read and will no doubt urge many to visit this part of the country.

### *The New Topiary*

by Patricia Riley Hammer; published by Garden Art Press and distributed by Antique Collectors Club, 5 Church Street, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 1DS, England. Approximately \$60.00.

reviewed by Tim North

The subtitle of this beautifully presented book is "Imaginative Techniques from Longwood Gardens". The author has worked at Longwood since 1977 and is responsible for the topiary creations at that unique horticultural show-place, 30 miles west of Philadelphia.

The very word "topiary" is anathema to some people. They fail, however, to understand its true purpose. Katy Moss Warner, who is General Manager Parks Horticulture for Walt Disney World Company, puts us on the right course in her Foreword to this book in just three words — "Fun, Fantasy, Magic". That is exactly what topiary is, or what it should be. Nowhere is this "New Topiary" more skilfully executed towards providing fun, fantasy and magic, than it is at Longwood Gardens.

Longwood's topiary creations, most of them mobile, range from tiny animals to self-watering life size elephants, from table top pieces of just one plant to immense chrysanthemum balls. In this fascinating book we are taken, in considerable detail, through the techniques of making and maintaining these creations.

The most popular topiary style is a wire frame stuffed with spagnum moss and planted with rooted cuttings. These, with care, will last for months, even years. Rabbits, cats, birds — there is no end to what can be made. Children can be taught to make topiary figures using nothing more than a wire coathanger. A ball can be made by using two wire hanging baskets, or even one basket and

a perforated plastic pot. These are quite easy to make and within the resources and ability of almost anyone.

The fun, fantasy and magic really come with the big set-piece topiaries; two penguins, one playing a violin, the other a piano; reindeers; elephants; the Good Fairy; and dragons.

This book covers techniques other than topiary; making standards of a whole range of plants, like ivy geraniums, poinsettias, bougainvillea, fuchsia, even coleus, Sydney Golden Wattle and westringia. It tells us how to make living wreaths, wire frame flower topiaries and, on the grand scale, a carousel, a pagoda and a dragon garden.

The pictures are inspirational, of a standard that one would expect of Longwood where, one suspects, anything that is not perfect is not good enough. This is more than a picture book, though, for it tells us how we can make these fabulous creations. It is crammed full of ideas which we can copy. There is an extensive plant list as well as a long list of suitable ivy cultivars.

Even if you don't like "topiary" you can hardly fail to be impressed, instructed, and amused, by this sumptuous book.

## BOOK LIST

### *The Essentials of Orchid Growing,*

by Gordon C. Morrison; Kangaroo Press 1991; \$35.00.

### *From Rainforest to Bonsai; Bonsai in Australian Native Plants*

by Len Webber; Mount Annan Botanic Garden Native Plant Series; Simon and Schuster Australia, 1991; \$16.95.

### *The Native Garden Doctor*

by Phil Hadlington and Ted Taylor; also in the Mount Annan Botanic Garden Native Plant Series; Simon and Schuster Australia, 1992; \$16.95.



# The Possums Are Back!

*Barbara WENZEL wages war on nocturnal, plant eating marsupials.*

"The possums are back". This simple statement, uttered by the paterfamilias as he removed the evidence from his shoe, was enough to quite ruin my breakfast. Few words are more likely to induce panic and paranoia round this neck of the woods. The possum's voracious appetite for the choicest and tenderest plants in the garden has frequently reduced me to despair. Numberless past battles flash before my eyes. The scorecard to date is not encouraging. I believe that I may hold some sort of record for the number and variety of possum-protection measures tried and failed.

It has been suggested to me from time to time that I give up the unequal struggle and "share" the garden with the brutes (the term is mine; the advocates of "sharing" usually employ some other nomenclature). All I can conclude from this is that the sharers and I are not discussing the same species of possum. My possums are satisfied with nothing less than the lot. We suffer plunder and pillage on an epic scale which leaves not a bud, not a new shoot, not even a berry on the ivy, for heaven's sake. This is not sharing, this is the full scorched-earth bit.

It may be helpful to those similarly afflicted to run through some of the anti-possum strategies which have not worked — a sort of save-time service for beleaguered gardeners.

Wooden stakes soaked in creosote were an early ploy. This I believe was touted on a local radio station as being an effective deterrent. My possums were thrilled — the stakes made excellent perches to reach the higher buds. The same program suggested scattering blood and bone on the target plants to spoil the flavour. In our garden it seems to act as a seasoning — MSG for marsupials. Flagging appetites were revived overnight. My simple unquestioning faith in that particular program suffered a bit of a set-back.

I then decided to fall back on my own ingenuity, always a risky manoeuvre. It was a simple matter to track a possum's path through our garden — a diet as rich in roughage as we provide produces ample evidence of their progress. It was clear that the preferred route was along the top of the brick front wall. If, I reasoned, this could in some way be made a difficult or uncomfortable trip, surely they would decide it was easier to lunch elsewhere. Like the neighbour's garden.

I provided myself with large quantities of putty and drawing pins. Laboriously I spread the putty along the top of the wall and in it I embedded the drawing pins, points uppermost. Several passers-by nervously crossed to the other side of the street and one hurried off with the look of a man who feels he must inform a responsible authority, but I persevered with the task. The setting sun glinted menacingly on a forest of spikes as I retired feeling rather pleased with myself.

The early morning reconnaissance was a bitter blow. "Ignore" is the only way to describe the possums' reaction to my fortifications. They had rhumba'd across them, stripping branches with contemptuous ease. And, by way of critical comment on my pathetic defences, leaving goodly quantities of their odoriferous calling cards impaled on my spikes. To the casual observer it must have seemed an unusual way to decorate the top of a brick wall.

And so we came to the traps. I have to admit at once that they did work. I didn't even have to become involved to begin with. Some atavistic urge seized the males of the family at the first sight of the traps and they strode about the garden in a forceful manner giving each other orders and generally being manful. Somewhat to my annoyance, they were immediately successful and caught two possums on the first night. My mood did not improve when it became clear that the great white hunters' job was over with the capture. Disposal was the business of the womenfolk.

What do you do on an early suburban morning with a bootful of furious, spitting, urinating, defecating marsupials? It was quite a poser for the sole remaining womenfolk. Driving enormous distances before releasing them is essential, otherwise they beat you home. Even then, finding a sufficiently deserted spot to do the shameful deed is not easy. The Garden State is packed with keen gardeners who do not welcome any boosting of the local population of destructive fauna. The possums were eventually returned to the wild, but the better part of the day was gone.

Back to the drawing board.

Roused to combat, he-who-wears-pinstripes again entered the fray. Shrewdly noting that the beasts were nocturnal — thereby startling his kin with hitherto hidden zoological expertise — he trained all available outdoor spotlights on one particularly ravaged arch of roses. The illumination was adequate for a night cricket



## LETTERS



Dear Tim,

It was most interesting to read Mary Grant's impressions of the New Zealand garden scheme in your December/February issue. It would seem that this program has several admirable qualities but it is unfortunate that she choose to compare it with the South Australian Open Garden Scheme.

The original vision for this was somewhat different to that of the New Zealand counterpart, and Mary Grant's letter contains much misinformation about it which should be corrected.

The scheme was an initiative of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide and sponsored by Adelaide's leading newspaper, *The Advertiser*, as an event to celebrate South Australia's sesquicentenary in 1986. At that time it was envisaged that all those who wished to share their gardens with the public would be able to do so through advertisements in the newspaper. The 1986 Open Garden Scheme was a resounding success, a credit to those participants prepared to risk success or otherwise, and the present scheme evolved from that year as a consequence of the tremendous public support.

Many thousands of South Australians continue to visit the State's open gardens and although it is true that the attendance statistics do vary for a variety of reasons, the numbers reached through *The Advertiser* could never be equalled by a book like that in use in New Zealand. Also, bearing in mind that most gardens open twice each season,

very few have been complete washouts. This method of advertising also offers advantages for participants by allowing alterations to selected dates and withdrawal at the last minute, particularly in a time of family crisis.

I am surprised that Mary Grant believes that the South Australian Open Garden Scheme gardens have to be immaculate. The participating gardens have presented a huge variety of sizes and designs and I suggest she has been selective in the ones she has visited. It is also true that a few participants withdraw each year, for many different reasons. What she has ignored, however, is that new gardens join the scheme each year, thus maintaining an interesting diversity.

The South Australian Open Garden Scheme has not had an operating budget and the time and energy given to organization has been voluntary. Its success is due entirely to the tremendous goodwill of those prepared to share their gardens and to *The Advertiser* sponsorship. As a co-ordinator during the formative years I regret that someone who, it would seem, could have made a positive contribution to the scheme, has chosen to misrepresent it in a public and negative manner. One wonders why.

Yours sincerely,  
Pam Smith, Belair, South Australia.

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### *The Possums are Back!, continued from page 173*

match. This was a great success — no midnight raids on those roses for several nights. There were, however, one or two minor drawbacks:

- (a) munching on the rest of the garden doubled
- (b) the electricity bill looked set to rival the National Debt and
- (c) one of the spotlights set fire to some dry leaves during the night and we almost lost the fence.

The barbed wire was perhaps a natural progression from the spotlights. Forgetting for the moment that our personal species of possum come with iron-clad feet, I painfully (and I use the term advisedly) unravelled and secured several large coils of barbed wire over the rose arch and along the top of the fences. Even painted a tasteful shade of Brunswick Green it caused the neighbours to seriously consider relocating to a quieter district. And needless to say it was utterly ineffectual. The feasting continued unabated.

At this point the reader may well be tiring of this sorry tale of failure. But a gleam of hope is at hand.

Somewhere I had heard that possums are not fond of the smell of mothballs. I had tried scattering quantities of the things all over the garden without the slightest discernible effect. It was sheer desperation that drove me down this road again. It seemed to me I had somehow to get the mothball smell onto rather than under the plants: I bought a large box of naphthalene flakes. I boiled them up in a saucepan of water. This had the immediate effect of clearing the house of humans; the smell was awesome. Encouraged, I strained the stuff and sprayed it onto the most favoured possum snacks in the garden.

I hardly dare to write the words, but it actually seemed to work. That season, my rose bushes had buds that were allowed to flower. The fruit trees retained their new shoots and actually increased in size for the first time in years. Could the possums simply have got bored with such easy pickings and moved on, or was it my obnoxious spray? If you can stand the smell and don't mind sacrificing a saucepan, it might be worth a try if your garden is preyed upon by possums. You won't have many moths in the kitchen either.





# **DRY STONE WALLS — 1**

by Nathan PERKINS

*CONSTRUCTING A NEW FREE-STANDING WALL*

**I**n an age when even more hi-tech is being surpassed by yet more hi-tech, there is an even greater need to simplify our lives.

Nothing could be more simple than dry stone walling. As the name suggests, dry stone walling (or dyking, as it is called in Scotland) is the craft of constructing walls without the use of mortar or any other bonding agent. It relies solely on the selection and placement of stones and a combination of gravity and friction.

Whether it be to enhance a corner of a rose garden, to provide shade and shelter to an exposed area or to retain an earth bank, this ancient craft could be the answer for your garden or property. Dry stone walls also provide a splendid habitat to many species of small birds and animals, insects and plants; and because the materials used are natural, the walls blend harmoniously into the landscape. Walls are, of course, fireproof, and with a little regular attention will outlast any form of fencing.

Essentially, there are two types of walls; retaining walls and free standing walls. For the purpose of this article we will concentrate on the construction of free-standing walls.

## **Sources of stone**

Any stone can be used for walling, from worn river boulders, to volcanic spalls and thin shaly slate. I have never yet encountered a stone I cannot work with.

If you are fortunate enough to have a ready supply of stone on your property, then half the battle has been won. It then only has to be collected and transported to the site of the new wall. I do not believe in encouraging people to demolish existing walls or buildings.

Farmers may be willing to sell their field stone and can often be persuaded to help with haulage for something in return.

Stone can be purchased from quarries, but a word of warning. Check this stone carefully before purchasing, as modern quarrying techniques tend to make the stone highly susceptible to shattering. Quarries also will deliver and this can be of tremendous assistance.

The Department of Conservation and Environment in your State can often provide a licence to collect stone and direct you to sources of stone in your area.

A final option is to purchase stone from landscape suppliers, but their prices tend to be inflated and they often charge by the stone.

## **Tools**

These include

- a tape measure or rule
- a pick and shovel
- some tough string
- stone hammer, weighing 1.5 to 2 kg.
- walling pins or walling frames which have the same cross

section dimensions as the wall to be built. I personally prefer the former for their versatility.

- Optional
- a crowbar
- a sledge hammer, and
- gloves.

## **Safety**

I have yet to meet a dry stone waller who looked even remotely like Arnold Schwarzenegger! The skill is in using one's body weight thoughtfully and planning the lifting of large stones carefully. Have someone help you where possible. Use a wheelbarrow where you can. Roll a stone rather than lift it where you can. I cannot emphasize enough that when you do lift a stone always lift by **bending the knees and keeping the back straight**. Lastly, keep the work area as clear as possible at all times. You don't want to stumble over a pile of loose stones to get to the wall.

## **Dimensions**

The dimensions used in this article are for a wall 1.4 metres high, which is an average height for a boundary wall. However, a wall can be built more or less any convenient height. A rough guide is that the width of the wall under the copestone (refer to figure 1) should be half that of the base. If in doubt, make the wall wider rather than narrower. ➔



## BUILDING THE WALL

### The foundations

Mark out the line of the wall with strings approximately 80 cm apart. If on soft ground, dig a shallow trench (10 to 20 cm deep) so that loose earth and grass is removed. On stony or compacted ground this is not necessary so long as the site is level and mostly without obstructions, especially tree roots.

Always build logically. Place the largest stones first in the foundations (refer to figure 2). To provide a sturdy base for your wall place the foundation stones flat side down (if they have one). Pack around and under them with smaller stones. If you have a large space inside your wall, fill it with one large stone, not a dozen small ones. Figure 3 shows a good foundation as against a bad one. Throughout the building process do not be tempted to fill the wall with clay, soil, screenings, etc. no matter how tempting, as this will seriously weaken the structural integrity of the wall.

Do not feel disheartened if this part of the building process appears to take an abnormally long time. The whole strength of the wall depends on the careful placement and packing of the foundations. You cannot be too careful.

### Building

1. Most importantly, always cover the joints formed by the stones



Good



Bad

Figure 2 — Foundations

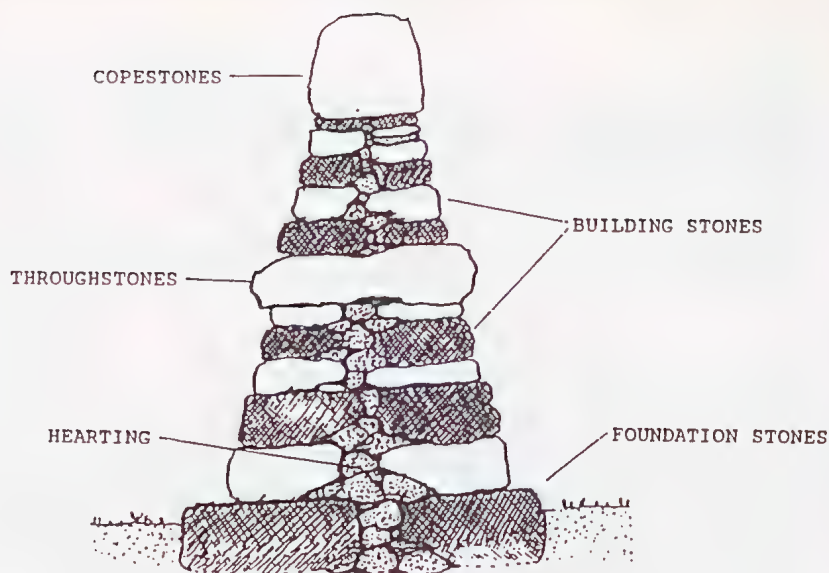


Figure 1 — Cross-section of a finished wall.

2. Lay the stones so that they lie with the longer side running into the wall, not along the face (known as "trace walling"). This gives a much stronger wall.
3. Make sure that each stone is firmly in place before moving on to the next.
4. As far as possible, use the larger stones at the bottom of the wall. If used too near the top, there is a danger that there will not be sufficient space left on the opposite side of the wall.
5. Fill the wall as the work proceeds — do not leave it as a separate job.

below, otherwise lines of weakness, called "running joints", will develop (refer to figure 3).

6. Build up both sides of the wall at the same time, keeping each side roughly the same height.

### The throughstones

Not all walls have throughstones, as in some areas stones that are long enough cannot be found. If they are available they should be placed at approximately one metre intervals, about halfway up the wall. They help to give the wall more integral strength. Place them flat side down, making sure that they cover a joint on either side of the wall.

### Final lift

As the wall goes up it becomes considerably narrower, which is why the larger stones should be used in the lower courses. It is even more important to pack these smaller stones very carefully as they will move more easily unless completely firm.

### The copingstones

The wall will now be about 35 cm wide at the top of these courses and ready for the copingstones. These will not only bind the wall





*(above) Constructing a new dry stone wall from collected field stones; Kyneton, Victoria.*

*(below) A new feature garden wall; July 1991.*

*photos N. Perkins*





together at the top in the same way as the throughstones do in the middle, but will resist damage if crossed. They also make the wall look more attractive. Place each copestone beside the other, but do not create a domino effect by having each supporting the last. Each stone should be self-supporting.

Having topped-off the wall, the copestones are now pinned. This is done by taking V-shaped slices and driving them into the spaces between the copestones with your hammer until they are firmly wedged. If this is done properly, then you will be able to walk along the top of the wall without any movement of the stones below.

The type of stone in your area may vary greatly from that found elsewhere. This will dictate the type of wall that evolves. Do not be

disheartened if the walls that exist in your area (if any) do not resemble the models used for this article. The basic principles never vary, and can be applied to any type of stone.

The next article will cover construction of dry stone retaining walls.

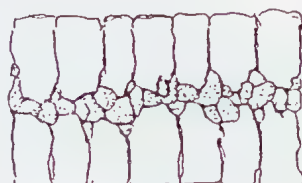
For a more detailed guide to basic building and repairing of dry stone walls, send \$5.99 plus \$1.00 postage and handling payable to the author to obtain a copy of the Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain's manual "Building and Repairing Dry Stone Walls".

A price list of walling tools such as walling hammers and walling pins is available from the author. Further enquiries and details of forthcoming courses and seminars can also be obtained from:

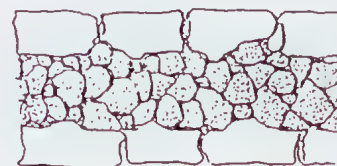
Nathan Perkins,  
PO Box 975,  
Mount Waverley,  
Vic. 3149.



*Foundations prepared; note the staggering of the foundation stones to cross bind the wall.*



Good

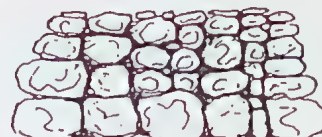


Bad

Foundations



Crossed Joints



Running Joints

Figure 3 — Rights and wrongs.



# The Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden at Port Augusta

by John ZWAR

It is more than ten years since I first publicly launched the proposal to develop an Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden at Port Augusta. The need for such a development was really obvious to me following a six month Churchill Fellowship study tour of ornamental horticulture in arid regions of several countries, where I observed many Australian plants being grown for a wide range of uses. We still have a great deal to learn about our rich and varied arid zone flora, and in fact new species of plants are still being discovered.

## The Concept

The concept is to establish a world standard arid lands botanic garden, featuring plants from as many regions of arid Australia as possible, for study, research and display, thereby helping to conserve Australia's unique arid lands flora.. It is expected that the garden will become an important centre for education at all levels, and that an advisory and extension service will be provided for residents, communities and developments in arid Australia. It is proposed also to exchange and sell information, plant material and seed worldwide.

Additional benefits of the development include the creation of a tourism venue of major importance with considerable impact on tourism locally, with the creation of jobs. The garden will also be a venue to display,

demonstrate and use technology appropriate to arid Australia — perhaps solar and wind power, water harvesting and conservation techniques, desalination and appropriate building design, to mention a few.

## The Site

The site set aside for the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden is an area of approximately 300 ha at Port Augusta West. It is undulating and contains the best remaining pockets of natural vegetation close to the city and has range of soil types. The site boundaries are Spencer Gulf, the Whyalla railway, the Old Tarcoola Road and a housing subdivision. The great advantage of the site is its accessibility, with all the services and facilities of a regional city adjacent. The site commands impressive views over the headwaters of the Spencer Gulf to the Flinders Ranges and north west to the Tent Hills, which provides a fine setting and has a real outback feeling. The adjacent urban area is not dominant and is hidden from view from most of the site which slopes away to the north and east. There are areas of woodlands dominated by *Acacia papyrocarpa* (Western Myall), and *Myoporum platycarpum* (Sugarwood), and areas of shrub lands dominated by *Acacia ligulata* (Umbrella Bush) and extensive chenopod shrub lands. The coastal strip provides added interest with coastal samphires and *Avicennia marina* (Mangrove).

The site is Crown Land which at present is leased to the Port Augusta City Council under annual license. There are sites of aboriginal interest and a site of major interest in the European history of Australia, Flinders Red Cliff, which was climbed by the well known explorer Matthew Flinders during his exploration of the southern coast of Australia in 1802 and from which he took sightings of prominent peaks and landmarks.

Problems at the site include rabbits, rubbish and some pest plants and these are being progressively addressed. Besides the advantage of accessibility the site is almost frost free because of the influence of Spencer Gulf, making it possible to grow some species from the arid tropics as well, unlike centres away from the coast where winter frosts can be severe.

## Publicity and Promotion

Since first proposing the development of the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden in 1981 there has been widespread publicity, promotion and lobbying of governments to obtain funding for development. In 1983 the South Australian Government established a Working Party, chaired by Dr Brian Morley, Director of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide, to thoroughly investigate the proposal. This report commented in favour of the development.

In 1984 The Friends of the Australian Arid Lands Botanic ➡





Garden, Port Augusta Inc. was formed. This support group has vigorously promoted the project ever since, with letters, petitions to governments, circulars and pamphlets, displays, media contacts, provision of guest speakers for numerous groups and providing guided tours. Membership has remained steady at around 200, mainly within Australia but some overseas. Social functions with appropriate guest speakers and site visits are arranged for members and a newsletter keeps them up to date with progress. The Friends have raised more than \$50,000 to date, all of which has been spent on or is committed to the project. It is appropriate to acknowledge the tremendous amount of work undertaken by our foundation Secretary, Pauline Schiller, who has recently retired from this position, and Wally her husband and Friends ➡





(opposite top) Sign on Stuart Highway.

(opposite bottom) *Carpobrotus* species (Pigface) and *Myoporum platycarpum*

(above) View from Flinders Red Cliff looking north up Spencer Gulf; *Maireana sedifolia* (Bluebush) in foreground, *Avicennia marina resinifera* (Mangrove) on Tidal Flats. Flinders Road is in the distance.

(right) *Acacia papyrocarpa* (Western Myall) in chenopod shrubland.

photos by J. Zwar





foundation Treasurer, who died in December 1990. Between them they gave 14 years of dedicated, untiring service which is largely the reason for the Friends' success.

The year 1985 saw a number of developments affecting the project. Flinders Red Cliff was developed as a tourist lookout, funded by a small state tourism grant. The South Australian Government also announced a grant of \$50,000 to fund a comprehensive study covering all aspects of the project. This study was completed in December 1986 and was finally released to the public in 1988 after continued pressure on the government to do so. The study supported the development, which was later endorsed by the South

prevent vehicular access. Assistance was given to Woods and Forests Department personnel who that year started the first tree establishment trials on the site, and a tree plantation was established on the adjacent Whyalla Railway reserve.

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corporate, to enable development to proceed.

In 1989 the South Australian Government provided \$10,000 from the Extractive Areas Fund (quarry levy) which was allocated to the Woods and Forests Department to undertake research on water harvesting techniques on the site research area. This was a two year project and complimented earlier tree establishment trials undertaken by Woods and Forests on the site. Australia Day 1990 was chosen by the Electricity Trust of South Australia to make a corporate donation of \$10,000 which was used to further the water harvesting research. The Electricity Trust is a major employer in Port Augusta where there are three coal burning power stations using Leigh Creek coal from the north of the State. ETSA has for many years had a strong commitment to mine site rehabilitation and amenity plantings at its operations in the arid zone.

Western Mining Corporation became a Corporate Sponsor in 1989 when \$5,000 was provided for site contour maps and a detailed flora survey on the site. Work on this commenced in 1990 and is continuing. Botanists from the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide are undertaking the survey, to be spread over a two or three year period.

## A Master Plan

In November 1990 Western Mining Corporation decided to further support the development of the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden by funding a major project — the preparation of a detailed master plan. Mr Grant Henderson, a landscape architect from the University of Canberra, was contracted to undertake this project and he commenced work on the site in January 1991. He remained in Port Augusta for six months and compiled a vast bank of information which is being formulated into a master plan. He returned to Canberra in July 1991 to continue with his lecturing duties and complete the master plan.

It is expected that the completed plan will be available early in 1992 for presentation to Western Mining Corporation and Port Augusta City Council. Mr Henderson has made a number of preliminary reports to the WMC Board, the City Council and the Friends.

Important aspects of his proposals include the growing of only Australian native arid zone plants in the garden rather than also having exotic species as originally recommended, and that a building style and design appropriate to the site be used with rammed earth as the construction material. The garden will be developed at least in part as an eco-park where aspects of the environment in addition to plants be featured, showing the interrelationships between them. A very large walk-through aviary divided into various sections featuring vegetation types and species of birds which would normally be found in them may be included. With such a large site there is room for the garden, a research and seed production area, zones of natural vegetation and buffer and screening plantings in appropriate areas. There is ample room for expansion if necessary. It is proposed to have displays and facilities of a very high standard both in the visitors centre and outside. A trailer train stopping at various locations is proposed to allow easy and quick access to all of the large garden for those whose time is limited or who cannot walk long distances, especially in hot weather. An entry fee will be charged. In 1991 Mr George White, Western Mining Corporation Group Manager, Environment, was appointed to the City Council Advisory Committee.

## The Situation Today

We await with interest the final presentation by Grant Henderson and hope that WMC will continue with sponsorship of the project. It appears that the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden will cost between \$9 and \$12 million, spread over a 15 year development period, but this will obviously depend on many variable factors. Numerous State and Federal politicians have visited the site and it is encouraging to note that all major political parties are in favour of the development. The state of the Australian economy suggests it is unlikely that the project will be fully funded in the short term, so it is important to continue to promote and seek funding for this very important and long awaited development.

The City Council Advisory Committee has the aim of acting as a catalyst to ensure that the garden is commenced and it is intended that when the project proceeds it will become part of the excellent system of botanic gardens already operating in South Australia.

Readers with an interest in the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden are asked to do what they can to promote the project — perhaps by writing to Federal or South Australian Ministers for the Environment or perhaps to the editor of "The Australian" or the Adelaide "Advertiser". They may also like to join the Friends group to show their support and to keep up to date with developments. It is the hope of all concerned that our efforts in promoting and working towards this project will be rewarded by at least a commencement of part of the development in the near future. 

**Note:** The annual subscription to the Friends of the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden Inc is \$8 (individual) or \$10 (family and institutional). Any donation in addition will be gratefully accepted.

Cheques should be sent to The Secretary, The Friends of the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden Port Augusta Inc, PO Box 2040, Port Augusta, SA 5700.





# From Rocks to Rhododendrons

*Tim NORTH talks with  
Barbara TOOTH in her garden  
at Fern Tree, on the slopes of Mount  
Wellington, Hobart.*

**Barbara, the old garden was destroyed in the bush fires of 1967, so when you came here — seven years ago, was it? — what did you find?**

We arrived in October 1984. The garden had re-grown since the fires but in what we thought to be an undesirable way. There were short paths with no long vistas amidst a mass of cotoneaster, native fuchsia, blackberry and an assortment of wattles, etc. In the front the driveway came to the front door and a hedge of cotoneaster and ivy hid the house from the lane. There were half rotten eucalypt trunks struggling to find soil amongst the stone.

**Did you make all these terraces? It must have been a huge task on such a steep sloping site.**

Yes, we made the terraces and it was a big job. We decided that it would be easier to clear the hillside and start again rather than keep the same structure. We wanted to open it out and obtain some longer garden views

as we zig-zagged down the hill. In front we wanted to keep garden between us and the inevitable cars, which were relegated to behind a tea-tree fence. We hired a large caterpillar bulldozer for two days (which was astonishingly cheap) and

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*“We decided it would be  
easier to clear the hillside  
and start again rather than  
keep the same structure.”*

---

built the terraces from the uncovered rock. This was April 1985 and we worked through that winter, doing much of the work at night under spotlights.

**You are about 500 metres above sea level, yet Mount Wellington still towers above you. What effect does this have on the climate?**

A major effect of Mount Wellington is the added rainfall; we have about twice the rainfall of the centre of Hobart. Another effect is the downdraft of the prevailing westerly winds. The temperature is surprisingly mild with only about one day a year of snow sufficient to make driving difficult and perhaps 10 to 20 nights of frost (but never more than two or three degrees). Lastly, because of the steepness of the northerly slope we get considerable warmth of the winter sun on the soil, which it strikes at an angle of about 90 degrees.

**The soil seems to be very stony, so presumably doesn't have much in the way of humus. So how do you manage to grow rhododendrons so well?**

Yes, there is very little humus. We have imported a lot of pine bark which, when it is well rotted, provides a very good medium for rhododendrons. The only minor difficulty is getting the nitrogen right; until the pine bark is com-



pletely rotted there is a continual deficiency, but if one adds too much we get all leaf and no flowers.

**Rhododendrons are obviously a big interest with both of you. How did this start?**

Our interest in rhododendrons started when we lived in Devonport,

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*“We have imported a lot of pine bark which, when well rotted, provides a very good medium for rhododendrons.”*

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where the red acid loam was ideal. The climate, too, on the north-west coast of Tasmania was ideal, and one of the world's great rhododendron gardens is in the making there. A very strong and enthusiastic rhododendron society further stimulated our interest.

**What about wind? I imagine that on this soil plants tend not to make very large root systems, so is wind a big problem?**

We do have problems with wind blowing rhododendrons over once they are established as the root systems are profuse, but of course close to the trunk, in our rotted pine bark. Wind retards growth after damaging the leaves. Before we developed windbreaks we did have the occasional plant denuded of leaves by gales. However the common gum on the mountain, *Eucalyptus obli* grows so fast that we were able to get protection from the west fairly quickly.

**Apart from rhododendrons, what plants do especially well here?**

We like maples as companion plants, but clematis do particularly well as do dahlias which provide marvellous colour after the end of the rhododendron season.

**Does the name “Fern Tree” have any special connotation?**

It has the connotation of man ferns, which do very well if you keep the water up to them. We plan to have more of them as we develop the area down towards the bush.

**The garden is very much a joint effort between your husband John and yourself. Do you have a recognised division of labour?**

The division of labour is quite marked, with John tending to do the major landscaping and I the fine details. John does the spraying with

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*“...the mountain atmosphere with bush tracks adjacent to our garden, yet only 10 minutes to the city centre...”*

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Roundup to keep bracken and blackberry out of the garden. Finally, we feel lucky that our preferred area in which to live — the mountain atmosphere with bush tracks adjacent to our garden, yet only 10 minutes to the city centre — is also the best area for rhododendrons.





# The Alternative to Lawn – Domestic Reafforestation

by Nancy BECKHAM

*“Lawns are a stubborn holdover from a European heritage. They connote wealth and property — and they are necessary for play and recreation. But they are labour and energy intensive and sterile in terms of wildlife. Give some thought to how much area you really need for lawns and convert the rest to beds of trees, shrubs or native grasses”.*  
(“Trees in Towns”, edited by B. Clouston and K. Stansfield, Architectural Press, 1981)

Carefully mown grass with a few trees or shrubs may be pleasing to the eye but would it be more economical, labour saving, healthier for you and the environment and equally attractive if your front garden was planted as a mini-woodland? One way of thinking about your plants is to consider how many purposes each one fulfills; then you have to consider appearance, price, establishment costs and ongoing maintenance.

## Establishment Cost of a Front Lawn

If you buy turf for a front lawn of, say, 100 sq m and pay someone to prepare the ground as well as lay the turf, the approximate cost would be:

Turf at \$10.95 per sq m..... \$109.50

Delivery, ground preparation,  
fertiliser, laying, rolling,  
initial watering ..... 250.00

Most situations would require  
some topsoil, say 20 mm..... 70.00

The future outcome of a lawn is uncertain unless the drainage is good. 70 m of suitable plastic drainage pipe would cost around \$80; gravel \$90; material to cover pipe \$60; labour \$200... 430.00

You will need a mower and a whipper-snipper. If you buy them from the lower price range this will cost you a minimum of \$850. Assuming you want a back lawn for recreation we can allocate half the initial cost to the front area .... 425.00

So the initial cost of your front lawn would be in the region of ..... \$1,300

Very few people have a front lawn without any shrubs at all. The Standard Australian Design (SAD for short) commonly has a shrub border with one or two shrubs in the central area.

If you buy, say, 20 shrubs at \$12 each, plus two larger feature plants at \$30 each, the cost of the plants will be ..... 300.00

For pine bark mulch and some smaller ground covers you will pay another ..... 80.00

Assuming that you don't do the work yourself, delivery costs, labour plus a small quantity of fertiliser is estimated to cost .. 150.00

You can see from the above that establishing a typical front garden, including basic labour, could cost approximately ..... \$1814.50

## Maintaining a Lawn

According to lawn experts 100 sq m of lawn would require around one and a half hours labour each week, which works out at a labour cost of \$1,500 per year if you cost your time at \$20 per hour. In 31% of Australian homes it is the women who do the mowing. You may consider that your lawn provides you with exercise so that you actually save gym expenses and keep yourself healthy at the same time.

Good gardeners spend around \$100 per year on fertilisers, weedicides, pesticides and incidentals. Changing the mower blades, mower maintenance and fuel would cost at least another \$100.

In the warm months deep regular watering is necessary and this is likely to give you excess water charges in a hot, dry summer of, say, another \$100.

You can see, then, that maintaining your front lawn and some shrubs could cost you around \$1,800 per year if you include your own time.

These costs are very approximate. One large Sydney bowling club has an annual budget of \$100,000 for maintaining its lawns and greens.

While I wouldn't go so far as calling lawns “green cancers”, it may



be that most front lawns have been planted because that is what everyone else does and their main purpose is to look neat and complement the house.

Bill Mollison, in "Perma-culture" (Tangari Publications, 1988) wrote many uncomplimentary things about lawns. He estimated that only about 13% of them are used for recreation, and that any environmental benefits are more than offset by the amount of personal energy, chemicals, water, fertilisers and fuels used to maintain them. Part of the permaculture philosophy is that every plant should fulfill at least three functions, and my understanding is that complementing architecture is not classed as a function.

There are other ways of considering domestic land use. For example, how many native birds do you see perching on front lawns? How many lawns are really well maintained?

## Alternatives to the Front Lawn

The most obvious alternative is to have one or two trees, plus a mixture of shrubs and ground covers. For an area of around 100 sq m, an approximate costing would be:

2 trees in 12 in pots, mature height 6 — 10 m.....	\$80.00
18 shrubs in 8 in pots, mature height 2 — 3 m .....	216.00
24 shrubs, 7 in pots, mature height 1 m.....	192.00
25 dwarf shrubs, 6 in pots .....	175.00
4 climbers for fence on driveway side.....	48.00
2 small feature trees or ornamental shrubs, such as weeping standard, to be placed near front steps...	200.00
6 advanced ground covers .....	72.00
90 small border plants at \$1.30 each.....	117.00
40 small ground covers at \$2 each .....	80.00

**Total..... \$1188.00**

You could have a few small secluded areas of chamomile or dichondra lawn, although I have found these difficult to establish. Chamomile

likes being walked on and has an amazing apple-like fragrance; Dichondra doesn't like heavy foot traffic but once established is easy to maintain. Alternatively, you could have a tiled area near the front of the house to serve as additional outdoor living space. For about 15 sq m of tiling you would spend about \$200, plus sand and laying costs.

In addition to the planting out, someone would have to plan where to put the plants, do some soil preparation and fertilising, so that if you cost the labour at \$20 per hour you would be looking at a total of approximately \$2,000 for a basic multi-layered, environmentally friendly front garden. You could do it more economically yourself, but the establishment costs of a woodland front garden would be higher than that for a basic turf lawn.

## Advantages of a Mini Woodland Garden

Compared to a front garden which is predominantly lawn, a multi layered garden can have the following advantages:

- greater provision of oxygen; a 50 tonne tree produces at least one tonne of oxygen a year;
- absorption of a wide range of atmospheric toxins;
- better soil erosion prevention;
- more water recycling and run-off protection;
- animal and bird shelter; if you use leaf litter and prunings as mulch this will also provide cover for small mammals and lizards;
- privacy;
- noise deflection;
- blocking out unpleasant views and reducing light reflected from buildings;
- energy saving; this refers to personal labour as well as mower fuel, house cooling and heating costs;
- plants can be chosen to give character, soften or enhance building lines;
- although you would need a main front entrance to the house, you could create informal paths within

the garden to include exploring areas for children, or outdoor seating;

- most importantly, these types of gardens would require considerably less maintenance than a lawn. Pruning and other jobs would probably take less than 30 hours each year and you shouldn't have to replace many plants. The plants themselves would provide some nutrients from leaf fall and you wouldn't use as much water once the garden was established. Fertiliser costs would be less than for a lawn.

The disadvantages are:

- the initial planning, costs and work are higher;
- plants need to be selected very carefully to avoid problems as they mature; for example the amount of light that penetrates through the foliage of a large tree restricts the types of plants which can be grown underneath. The roots of some plants can be very invasive and damaging and some trees have brittle branches which can cause considerable damage when they fall;
- you have to wait some-years to get the full effect;
- people may be scared entering their homes at night; it's probably easier to burgle a house which is surrounded by trees; however the burglar can't see who is around either;
- your neighbours and friends may find it too unconventional;
- it may not blend in with the neighbourhood environment.

## Trees

On sites where both cooling in summer and heating in winter are needed, you need to plan carefully. Tall deciduous trees are a good choice but some, such as Liquidambar, have invasive roots. To get really effective cooling from trees they need to be higher than the roof because the summer sun moves in an arc thereby heating the roof more than the walls. You will have to assess the cooling effect against the bother of regularly clearing leaves from the guttering, fire risk and so on. Trees on the west side obviously provide good summer shade



and air exchange can be increased by pruning lower branches. In an urban setting, windbreaks are hard to organise and usually not necessary because neighbouring buildings act as a barrier.

If you have a large property, plant barriers can have a significant impact on wind reduction, consequently reducing the chill factor inside and outside homes. Plants are effective windbreaks for a distance of about four times their height, but in the open they can more than halve the wind speed for a distance of 15 to 20 times their height.

Dense evergreen planting close to a wall can prevent heat loss from a house but you need to choose carefully to prevent excessive loss of daylight and root problems. There would be some cooling effect in the summer also. Shrubs such as *Camellia sasanqua* would be suitable for this purpose and could be suitably pruned to suit the season, that is late autumn or early winter after they have flowered. A few small trees, for example *Rothmannia globosa*, with a generally narrow, upright growth would suit this purpose although it sometimes grows to roof height. Climbers could be trained onto a trellis to fulfill this function.

## Shrubs

The choice of large shrubs also needs careful consideration as some grow larger than the labels — and some gardening books — state.

*Rondeletia amoena*, *Viburnum tinus* and *Michelia figo* are examples of shrubs that grow to about five metres. These also tend to be densely leaved so that if you have them planted around evergreen trees you may be completely blocking out the winter sun. You can let them grow tall in summer to provide extra shade. Deciduous shrubs are another option — *Wiegela*, *Spiraea* and *Viburnum opulus* are a few examples.

## Ground covers

A problem with many ground covers in a domestic garden is that most will not tolerate being walked on to the same extent as conventional lawn grasses. With planning, they can provide interest, colour, aroma and flowers to complement the taller plants.



(above) Large heavily leaved trees may provide cool entrance in summer, but may create too much winter shade.

(below) Magnolias soften building lines, provide attractive screening and allow winter sun to reach windows.

photos by N. Beckham



If you have a large area of ground to cover, some climbers can be effective although most will need trimming back periodically. *Trachelospermum jasminoides* does well when used in this way and as a bonus you get masses of white perfumed flowers in the spring. You need to make sure that climbers are never allowed to grow onto trees or shrubs as they can cause strangulation as well as making the plants top heavy and more likely to be blown over in a storm. I would not recommend ivy as a ground cover because it becomes a nuisance after a few years and it is hard to remove the roots. The native violet (*Viola hederacea*) can also spread vigorously but is relatively easy to pull out the excess.

## Other options

There are a number of variations and alternatives to having a front garden of mixed trees and shrubs:

- a conifer garden of various sizes, shapes and colours
- a maple and azalea garden
- in a dry region, massed planting of cacti and succulents can make a spectacular display
- prairie gardens; these do not yet have unanimous approval because for some people ornamental grasses and flax-like plants are synonymous with large weeds.

Plants were on this earth hundreds of millions of years before humans; they can do without us but without them we would not get enough oxygen and we would quickly starve or roast to death.

Tree planting in particular is something that everybody can do to help the environment. Trees are probably the only things of sufficient size to offset the excesses of civilisation such as the ever increasing amounts of carbon dioxide emitted into the atmosphere.

“Renewing the urban forest won’t fix everything that’s wrong with a community but it is an excellent place to begin”



(*Shading Our Cities*, edited by G. Moll and S. Ebenreck, Island Press, 1989)





# Regional Delights

*Gail THOMAS samples some local produce in Central Victoria.*



Nestled on this shores of Lake Daylesford, in central Victoria, is the Lake House. In 1981 Alla and Allan Wolf Tasker purchased the 10 hectare site to build a restaurant, which was opened in 1983. It is open at weekends and public holidays and in 1988 accommodation units were built close to the restaurant. These units are available at all times for those seeking a peaceful country escape in the heart of Victoria's famous spa region, with its picturesque surrounds and mineral springs. They can also be used as a convention centre.

The view from the restaurant verandah is quite stunning, with the treeline descending to the shores of the lake, creating a seductive atmosphere. The gardens reflect Alla's love of gardening from both an aesthetic and a culinary point of view, a love which has been passed on from previous generations.

Alla is a self-taught chef, and over the years has worked in many kitchens both here and abroad. For some time she ran a catering business and cookery

*(above) View of Lake Daylesford from the verandah.*

*(left) Allan and Alla Wolf-Tasker.*

*photos by G. Thomas*



school in Melbourne, establishing the restaurant at Daylesford at the same time! As well as a Cordon Bleu course in France Alla has taken cooking school tours overseas to restaurants and into some famous name kitchens.

One of the important aspects of establishing a restaurant in the country is that it should have a good country “feel”. Alla cites the fact that while many restaurants serve excellent food, once seated diners could easily be transposed into the city and not even realise they are in the country! Her food has to reflect the good things about the country so that visitors will have an experience they will enjoy and remember.

Alla recalls her mother’s passion for growing and preserving food from the garden — like making dill pickles and salting cabbage, a reflection of her Rumanian heritage. As well as growing a wide range of fruit and vegetables Alla practises companion planting, following her mother’s example not only in her planting methods but in the extensive range of edibles she preserves from the garden.

The family tradition looks set to continue, as Alla’s 11 year old daughter shows a keen interest in gardening, and enjoys helping to gain hands-on” experience.

As the car park at Lake House is situated above the restaurant, guests are able to walk down through the fruit trees and herb and vegetable gardens. As the menu always features offerings from the garden one is able to anticipate a salad fresh from the range of plants growing there; this, depending on the season, may include dandelion leaves, endive, corn salad or even chive flowers.

Likewise, garden produce is featured in one of the desserts, be it rose petal ice cream or something from the versatile elderberry. In spring, elder flowers are used, while later the ripe berries may be incorporated into a dish and even when the tree is not productive some preserve, like elderberry syrup, may well be featured.

All garnishes used in the restaurant are edible, a fact that the staff are happy to point out to those guests who have not yet come to terms with eating flowers.

The herb garden is well used, with chives, oregano or salad burnet accompanying the appropriate dish. Petals from marigolds or herb flowers are also often sprinkled on dishes for added effect.

Alla has carefully chosen a range of fruit trees which are now well established and productive. Among these are various plums, a fig, quince, feijoa, nashi and a medlar — a tree not often seen today in home gardens, but one which not only provides interesting fruit but also an autumn show of richly coloured leaves.

A great deal of thought has gone into the planning and planting of the garden. Alla explained that when they bought the property there was no garden at all, and before a start could be made a huge amount of rock had to be removed and loads of topsoil brought in.

They now make all their own compost and there are two compost areas in use to ensure an ongoing supply.

Thanks to a local riding school, there is also plenty of manure readily available.

A section below the house is still very rocky, and Alla hopes to make this into a water garden, as a permanent spring fed creek runs alongside.

Already the range is impressive, with raspberries, red and black currants, alpine strawberries, tomatoes, zucchini, Jerusalem artichokes and a variety of lettuces, as well as rhubarb.

Of course, one of the reasons chefs like to grow their own produce is that they are guaranteed the freshest ingredients, as well as the ability to harvest the crop at the peak of perfection, ensuring the best flavour and quality. Seasonal produce is important and can be highlighted, as with the year round supply of many fruits and vegetables, people are not always in touch with the freshness of seasonal delights.

Alla is able to go into the surrounding countryside and in autumn pick fresh wild mushrooms which are an integral part of the menu. Although they appear in the markets from time to time, they are a totally new experience to many discerning diners. Of paramount importance is the ability to identify the species to ensure that it is edible. Alla collects the orange coloured saffron milk-caps (*Lactarius deliciosus*) which grow under pine trees, as well as the large slippery jacks, (*Suillus luteus*) which have a brown sticky cap with a yellow honeycomb underside. These take their name from the fact that they have a rather soft, slippery texture when cooked. There are three species of *Suillus*, sometimes called Boletus, all similar in size and appearance and all edible. Morels (*Morchella esculenta*) have a vertical cap and short stalk with a deep, honeycomb-like, pitted appearance and have a short season in spring. Although Alla does not collect these, she does have access to them from a neighbouring region where the soil is more sandy and more suited to their needs. It cannot be stressed strongly enough that one should never take any risks by eating exotic fungi, and always seek expert identification.

The Daylesford and Hepburn Springs area is steeped in culinary and winemaking traditions, thanks to the early migrant settlers.

I was once given a cutting of a “passionfruit flavoured” grape vine, which produces delicious red fruit. Although I have not been able positively to identify it, I was intrigued to learn that it was brought here 100 years ago by the Swiss-Italian settlers to the Hepburn Springs region. From my investigations so far it is possibly *Vitis lambrusco* ‘Concord’ variety, as this is known to have been brought here many years ago. It is a good cold climate grape, being disease resistant and frost tolerant, with quite large leaves around 20 cm in diameter; the fruit seems to be of the slip skin type.

One of the Swiss-Italian traditions was for families to gather to make bullboar sausages. Although this practice has been discontinued local butchers still make bullboars which, as their name suggests, are a mixture of pork and



beef. Claret, garlic, black and white pepper, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves and mixed spice are added to enhance the flavour, with the mixture being contained in natural ox casings. Gordon Chapman, of Chapman's Meat Supply in Daylesford, informed me that bullboars have been made on his premises for over 120 years, successive owners carrying on the tradition. The sausages can be boiled or fried and eaten hot or cold, sliced with bread and cheese. To extend the range, Gordon also makes bullboar rissoles and a bullboar salami, while the local cake shop makes bullboar pasties to order.

It is encouraging to find traditions of the early settlers retained, along with support for the regional producers who can offer the best in local fish, game and fresh fruits and vegetables, not to mention the quality wines which make fitting accompaniments to such produce.

The Lake House typifies the "real country restaurant", thanks to the dedication and enthusiasm of Alla Wolf Tasker. It exudes an air of warmth and relaxation, where diners have the advantage of being able to stroll through the garden and see the fresh, healthy produce growing. A unique opportunity few other establishments are able to offer, true regional food.

Lake House Restaurant and Accommodation is on King Street Daylesford, Vic. 3460.

Telephone (053)48.3329.



Alla has kindly provided two recipes where garden bounty can be preserved and enjoyed during the season when the fruit trees are not productive.

### Quince Sauce

2 kg quinces; 1 kg apples; 500 g onions; 1 tbsp cayenne pepper; 3 tbsps salt; 1 tbsp whole cloves; 2 tbsps whole allspice; 1 kg sugar; 3 lt malt vinegar.

Finely chop quinces and apples; discard cores.

Finely chop onions. Combine all ingredients in a large saucepan and mix well. Bring to the boil, stir to dissolve sugar.

Cook very gently for about three hours, until thick and very soft. Push as much through a sieve as possible, and pour into hot, clean bottles, and seal.

### Pickled figs

1 kg fresh, preferably under ripe, figs; one and a half cups of water; one and a half cups malt vinegar; 1 cup brown sugar; 50 g preserved ginger, chopped; 1 tssp whole cloves.

Combine water, vinegar, sugar, ginger and cloves in a saucepan. Boil, stir to dissolve sugar, then simmer, uncovered, for 30 mins. Add figs and cook slowly for about two hours, partially covered. Watch carefully towards end of cooking time to check that figs do not burn; add more water if necessary. Pack into hot, clean jars and seal.

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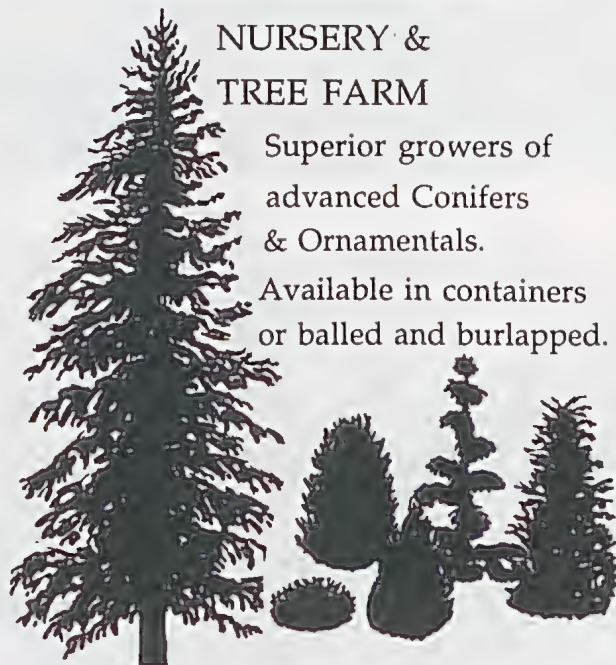
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# *Tulips*

*Grant DAVIES traces the introduction of the Tulip to European horticulture, and its cultivation in Australia today.*

**W**hat is the most romantic flower in your garden? Most people would probably answer that the rose is, but ask the same question of a tulip enthusiast and you may get a different answer.

Some exponents of tulip growing in this country will have you believe that theirs is the perfect lover's flower. They may even try to persuade you by citing an ancient legend that the first tulips sprang up where the tears of a rejected suitor had fallen. Apparently the object of his passion was so impressed by this display that she was instantly won over.

The people of 16th century Holland were also won over, as they are reputed to have paid high prices for the first tulip bulbs to come their way.

Although Holland is generally thought of as the home of tulips, a clue to their earlier, more exotic beginnings lies in their name, which is derived from the Turkish word "tulbend" meaning a turban, a fairly apt description of the classic tulip shape.

*(left) Tulips in Corbett Gardens, Bowral.*

*photo by Keva North*

*(left below) Apeldoorn*

*(right below) Queen of the Night*

*photos by G. Davies*





The emergence of Islam in the 7th century AD brought about a fresh interest in the decorative arts, including ornamental horticulture, while Europe was in the cultural void between the Roman order and the Renaissance.

The turning point for Europe came in 1554, when diplomatic relations were established between the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand I in Vienna and the Ottoman Emperor Suleiman in Constantinople. The first Europeans to visit the latter city would have been deeply impressed by stunning displays of exotic flowering bulbs, including tulips. Thus began the early migration of tulips from places such as Persia, Armenia and Turkey through the city of Constantinople to Vienna and thence to other parts of Europe around 1572.

Holland achieved its high profile in the world of tulip cultivation when the botanist Charles de Cluse (his name was latinized to Clusius) returned to Holland in 1580 after gathering bulbs abroad. Soon after this unusual tulip bulbs became a speculative currency and were traded with as much vigour as gold and oil are traded today. In fact transactions were recorded in which particularly sought after bulbs were traded for titles to houses and land. This phenomenal boom, known as "tulipomania" was brought to a halt by restrictive legislation in 1637.

The most significant species to find its way into Holland in the early days was *Tulipa gesneriana*. First discovered in Iran (Persia) and Armenia, it was amongst the bulbs being cultivated in the gardens of Constantinople when the city became accessible to westerners. It made its initial journey to Augsburg under the care of Conrad Gesner, after whom it was named, and from there found its way into Holland. It is believed to have been the first tulip species to migrate in this way.

*T. gesneriana* stands head and shoulders above other tulips, growing to 60 cm and bearing large flowers, originally in a colour range from crimson to deep purple.

The species is of particular interest to Australian gardeners because it is the ancestor of many of the varieties grown in this country today. John Weathers states in "The Bulb Book" that Darwin tulips in his opinion are really self-coloured forms of *T. gesneriana*. Dr Alfred Graf in his book "Tropica", takes the assertion a step further by prefixing the names of Darwin tulips were the specific name *gesneriana*.

Darwin tulips grow to a height of about 90 cm and bear large cup-shaped blooms embracing every known tulip colour.

The Darwin in turn is the forbear of the Darwin Hybrid group and the Triumph group, two of the most widely grown tulip categories in Australia.

Another descendant of *T. gesneriana* is *T. viridiflora*. In fact the relationship is so close that many people regard the latter as a natural *gesneriana* hybrid rather than a distinct species. Discovered in Turkey in the early 17th century, it has large blooms with an unusual colour combination of green and yellow. It has been used to produce several hybrids, one of which is currently available here. Known as 'Artist', this hybrid is compact, growing to

about 22 cm, with multi-coloured petals containing terracotta, salmon, green and cream.

Another group of hybrids derived partly from *T. gesneriana* is that known as lily-flowered tulips. These were introduced in 1915 from a cross between a cottage tulip and *T. x retroflexa*. The latter was produced in 1863 by crossing *T. gesneriana* with *T. acuminata*, which has long pointed petals. The result is a tall, elegant flower which opens out into a star shape. One variety at present available is 'Ballade', with magenta petals with a contrasting white margin.

Although there are about 99 species in the genus only a small number are available in Australia. One of these is *T. fosteriana*. Originally from Central Asia it has a much shorter stemmed flower than *T. gesneriana*, growing only to about 20 cm. However its blooms are among the largest of any tulip species, originally red with a black base. It is often marketed here as a rock garden bulb, because its natural habitat is among limestone rocks, mostly in the mountains of Samarkand. Some people find the combination of big, bold blooms and short stems rather inelegant when compared to the taller species, so *T. fosteriana* has often been used in crossing with taller varieties. Perhaps its best known role in this regard is the cross with the Darwin tulip to produce the Darwin Hybrid.

The contribution of *T. fosteriana*'s brilliant red colouring and bold size is nowhere more apparent than in the well known Darwin Hybrid called 'Apeldoorn'. Tall, with large brilliant red blooms, it has long been a favourite of commercial flower growers.

The classic *T. fosteriana* hybrid 'Red Emperor' is currently available in Australia. It is very close to the original species, being about 20 cm tall, with large bright red flowers with yellow and black centres.

*T. greigii* is a species which originated from the same location as *T. fosteriana*. The two are sometimes marketed together as rock garden tulips for that reason. *T. greigii* is generally the more compact of the two. The flowers are a vivid orange, marked with red on the outside, with a black base. The most notable feature of *T. greigii* is its foliage, glaucous green with patterns of purple, brown or yellow.

Another species marketed as a rock garden tulip is *T. saxatilis*, from the fields and rocky hillsides of Crete. It is easy to grow in Australia as it has minimal chilling requirements and a tendency to spread by lateral underground stolons. The flowers are bowl-shaped, lilac-pink with a yellow centre. Its leaves are a distinctive bright green.

Another species which appears on the Australian market from time to time is *T. kaufmaniana*, known as the Water Lily Tulip because of its star-shaped flowers. In its natural form it bears creamy-yellow blooms with rose-pink bars on the outside of the petals. It has been widely hybridised and some of its cultivars occasionally available are:

'Fritz Kreisler', short stemmed with large streaked salmon-pink blooms.

'Gaiety', very close to the natural form, and 'Orange Boy', with small bright orange blooms. ➡



In view of the variations in colour and flower shape now available it is surprising that tulips are not more popular with Australian gardeners. Some people may be put off by reading in books that bulbs must occupy the crisper drawer of the frig for about eight weeks every year.

The need for this, however, is a moot point. The issue is clouded by the fact that some species, like *T. saxatilis*, are used to a milder winter than others and can therefore do without the annual session in the frig in many parts of Australia. There are also some parts of the country where winter temperatures can fall so low that the refrigeration process is not necessary.

Most tulips in their natural habitat experience a period of winter temperatures between 2 and 12 degrees Celsius. If this does not occur the process of converting stored starch to sugar within the bulb is somewhat hampered, with the result that the stems fail to grow to their full height and the flowers tend to abort. If you live in an area where winter temperatures are that low you may also be able to avoid the need to lift the bulbs each year. In milder areas some people claim that it is still possible to get away with not lifting the bulbs if the soil can be kept cool by means of ground cover plants and/or mulching. This, however, is not generally recommended.


If this debate is all too tedious then perhaps you can afford to buy new bulbs each year and just leave them to their own devices once they have flowered. Tulips as annuals? A packet of ten fairly common tulip bulbs doesn't represent much more of an outlay than a couple of punnets of spring flowering annuals.

Another relevant factor in the debate about lifting bulbs is that most tulips naturally experience a warm, dry summer. Gardening books will tell you that the bulbs should be stored in summer where they will be kept dry and cool. This is designed to protect them from two perils, the high risk of fungal disease and the danger of "cooking". If you still want to leave your bulbs in the ground, you can try planting them in semi-shade, for example under a deciduous tree, or else grow them in pots which can be moved to a cool place in summer.

One of the rewards of lifting bulbs is that you will probably find offsets around each bulb which can be removed and replanted in autumn. On the other hand, a drawback in lifting bulbs is the fact that many have contractile roots which tend to pull the bulbs deeper into the ground. This can create problems if the bulbs are in a bed full of permanent plants which don't like having their own roots disturbed.

The other aspects of tulip cultivation are relatively simple. They enjoy a well drained, well tilled soil, light and friable with plenty of humus and preferably slightly alkaline. Plant the bulbs about 12 cm deep and the same distance apart. The soil should be given an application of a complete fertiliser before planting.

Pest and disease control is straightforward. Tulips are attractive to aphids so it may be necessary to spray with a suitable insecticide if infestation reaches an unacceptable level. The only other common problem is the disease known as tulip fire. Fungicides are not always effective against this disease so control is simply a matter of removing and burning infected plants and not replanting infected beds with tulips for several years. Fortunately, this disease occurs only spasmodically under humid conditions.

If you have the patience to make tulips at home in your garden the rewards can be inspiring. As for the tulip being the perfect lover's flower, if you can't cut any ice with the tall dazzling 'Apeldoorn', the sparkling gold 'Golden Apeldoorn' or the magenta and white lily flowered 'Ballade', try 'Queen of the Night'. Stately in height, classic in shape and a regal velvety black-purple, it must surely be guaranteed to win a heart ! 

#### Editor's Note:

This autumn Yates have introduced a range of three tulips in the 'Monet' range, Monet Scarlet, Monet Carmine and Monet White, which have been specifically developed to suit a wider climatic range than other tulips. Yates claim that they will grow well in all climates other than tropical. Yates have also added 'Queen of the Night' to their range and 'Apeldoorn Elite' to their Apeldoorn range; this has large red flowers with a golden edge.



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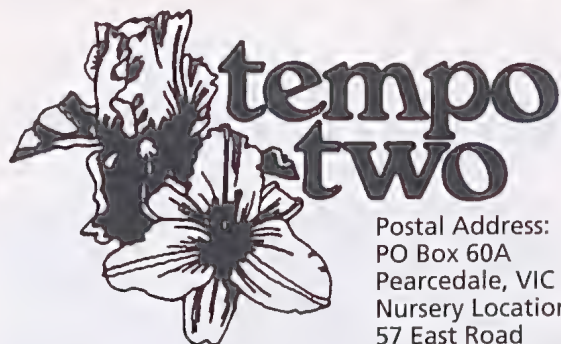
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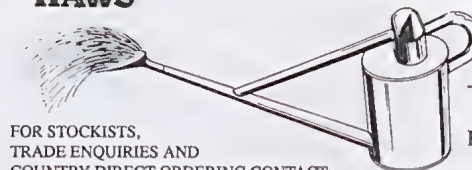


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# House and Garden of Eden



*Jimbour House... an invitation to a musical soiree was a "Return to Eden" for  
Ross McKINNON, Curator of the Brisbane Botanic Garden.*

**T**here is much more to Jimbour House, half an hour's drive west of Dalby on the vast, flat, black soil plains of Queensland's Darling Downs, than its impressive appearance.

Built in 1874, it has been home to the Russell family for almost 70 of those years. Through the kind invitation of its present gracious owner, Mrs Hilary Russell OBE, to a mildly Mozart musical occasion to aid the Queensland Arts Council, I found myself with over 100 other invited guests, drawn to this mecca of genteel civilisation.

I arrived at Jimbour on a blustery cloudy Sunday. In the gardens of the stately mansion currawongs were calling from the branches of the huge figs, bottle and palm trees or dive bombing the Italian fountains for liquid refreshment.

The only other sound was the wind sighing over the flat, featureless plains.

As the imposing presence of the Victorian house loomed before me once again — I had been privileged to present a television programme on these historic gardens for the ABC "Good Gardening" programme



the year before — I had no idea I was about to become privy to a remarkable tale.

The story of Mrs Hilary Russell and the stately home in which she lives reads like an epic novel with all the features of a romantic tale; a deep and abiding love for home and family, a beautiful young heroine swept off her feet by a young, handsome and wealthy country gentleman. But there is more to this story than romance — much more. There is the story of rural hardship, depression and bank collapses, crop failures and disappointments.

In the bleak winter of 1944 Charles Russell brought his bride, Hilary, home to Jimbour House, a vast sprawling mansion with more than 30 rooms, a host of servants, gardeners and estate workers. It seemed like a fairy tale, and indeed it was.

The couple spent a richly rewarding life together at Jimbour House and were blessed with five children. Only their son Alec remains at home now.

In 1977 Charles died suddenly, leaving Hilary and Alec to run the home and Russell Pastoral Company's properties. It has been a formidable task but one they took up with courage and determination.

Jimbour was first settled in 1840 by Richard Scougall. It then consisted of 211,000 acres, far from civilisation and surrounded by hostile natives. In 1842 there were 11,000 sheep and 700 cattle on the flat, grassy black soil plains. Scougall ran into financial difficulties and the station was sold to Thomas Bell for 3,000 pounds. On his death, it passed to his son Joshua Bell.

Work on the mansion began in 1874 and took two years to complete, employing 200 men including 10 stonemasons and nine carpenters. Cedar was obtained from the vast rainforests of the Bunya Mountains nearby, the stone from Bunjinnie and lime from limestone deposits on the property.

The interiors are gracious, with vast rooms featuring high ceilings with richly decorated cornices and elaborate gas chandeliers. Lofty stone pillars form a picturesque colonnade along the wide verandah and semi-circular steps lead down to magnificent gardens which to-day include a swimming pool. All the main rooms in the home open on to the verandahs via French doors and on to a wide central passageway.

Fireplaces of cedar or white sandstone are a feature of almost every room, although now modern heating and air conditioning systems have been installed.

When it was built Jimbour House was considered very modern for its time and even to-day, with its own water, power, large vegetable gardens and locally killed meat, there is a distinct feeling that an unseen drawbridge could be pulled up and Jimbour would go on forever in its own self sufficient way. Even gas was generated from coal mined on the property and water pumped to a tank on top of a 13 metre tower by the first windmill built in Queensland.

A small village has sprung up around the home; a church, school, butcher, blacksmith, general store and living quarters.

Joshua Bell led a distinguished parliamentary career, becoming acting Governor of Queensland and being knighted in 1879. Tragically, he died suddenly in 1881 at the age of 54 and the family fortunes declined, exacerbated by the 1890s bank crash and resulting depression. The Queensland National Bank sold the house in 1912 following the 1906 "Closer Settlement Act" which allowed compulsory acquisition of larger land holdings. The Jimbour estate was cut up.

Jimbour House changed hands twice before being bought in 1923 by Charles Russell's father, Wilfred Adams Russell, a prominent Roma pastoralist. By this time the mansion was in disrepair. The Welsh slate roof was leaking badly and as a result most of the ornate ceilings had fallen in, many upstairs windows were broken and dozens of birds were nesting in the bedrooms. What garden there was had become rank and overgrown.

Wilfred Russell began to put the pieces back together again, including the complete refurnishing of the huge rooms. Indeed, Hilary Russell is still carrying on the restoration, with the aid of an enthusiastic Italian stonemason, plasterer and artisan, Gino Sandrin.

To-day the large gardens, renovated and restored by the Russell family, are open to the public. The swimming pool is available for the enjoyment of local children. The gardens feature a large rose garden, formal circular drive, tennis court, a vegetable and herb garden, a large poultry run, and sweeping lawns meticulously maintained.

Mrs Russell herself adopts a largely philanthropic attitude to the house and garden. She believes such beauty and features should be enjoyed by all. Hence my kind invitation to this classical concert, easily accommodated in Jimbour's combined drawing and dining rooms.

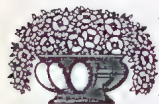
Jimbour House was also the setting for the television mini-series, "Return to Eden" and the huge publicity generated by that programme has greatly increased interest in the old home, both in Australia and overseas.

My impression, on both my visits, is of a delightful nostalgia; the warmth of history mingled with the sweet perfume of roses and two extraordinary personalities, that of Mrs Hilary Russell OBE and the place itself.

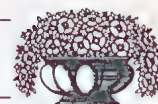
As I bid farewell and crunched my way along the deep perfectly raked gravel driveway to my car, parked by the aircraft landing strip, both waved farewell.

Jimbour House gardens are open by appointment, indeed visitors are frequently seen strolling the grounds admiring the roses and scuffling along the newly raked driveway.





## GARDEN CUTTINGS



### Green-up campaign

The Bronx Green-up has reclaimed property overrun with abandoned cars, rubble, rats and drug dealers. In three years Bronx Green-up has given away more than 1,000 shrubs, 6,500 vegetable plants and as many bulbs and perennials. 19 new gardens were added last year, bringing the total to 157 green spaces in the Bronx. Volunteers from day care centres, a junior high school and a home for previously homeless mothers and children, teach children how to plant, water, weed and make compost.

### A resource guide to the herb industry

Kim Fletcher, editor of "Focus on Herbs" magazine, is compiling a resource guide to the herb industry in Australia. This will list wholesale and retail nurseries, display gardens open to the public, sources of exotic and native herb seed, suppliers of fresh cut and domestically grown dried herbs, institutions and individuals offering courses in herbal education, suppliers of oils, dried botanicals and other materials, herb societies and groups, growers organizations, and herb magazines, newsletters, etc.

Information should be sent to 'Herb Industry Resource Guide', c/- Focus on Herbs magazine, PO Box 203, Launceston, Tas 7250.

### Sound barriers

In Europe several living "sound barriers" have been developed along highways. Tall soil berms are used where there is room for them, and these are planted on both sides with fast growing willows, the branches of which are interwoven to produce a dense hedge. A narrow version, developed in Hamburg, uses a double line of fencing made by weaving willow branches together, then filling the space between them with soil. The

willows root rapidly to create a solid screen and traffic noise is reduced through the combination of soil and foliage.

In the Netherlands a landscape design firm has patented several living barrier designs. One uses a steel A-frame planted with willows, alder and ash in moist areas, and maple, acacia and linden in drier areas. Another, called the "Semiramis Bank for the Queen of Babylon", suspends shelf planting units from a steel frame; this can rise to 10 metres on a 1.5 metre base. Another popular narrow barrier is the MOWI green screen, up to seven metres high but less than one metre wide; it consists of a wall made of steel framing lined with plastic netting and filled with a mix of soil, compost, peat and sand. Different varieties of plants are planted on both sides of the wall; generally smooth plants which do not jut out are used on the highway side so as not to distract drivers, but on the inner side, towards the homes, colourful foliage plants and flowering vines are used, together with many perennials.

### Mount Lofty Botanic Gardens

First opened to the public in November 1977, the Mount Lofty Botanic Garden is devoted to the cultivation of cool climate plants which are difficult to grow on the hot and dry Adelaide Plains. To make it easier to see the 97 hectares of the Garden, a Sunday bus service has been introduced on a trial basis; every 45 minutes a mini-bus will leave from either the upper or lower car park and take visitors through the garden, returning them to their point of arrival. There are four bus stops at strategic points which enable visitors to further explore certain areas if they wish. The cost of a round trip is \$2 for adults, and \$1 for children and concessions.

The bus service operates from 10 am to 4 pm on Sundays only.

### Garden visiting by steam train

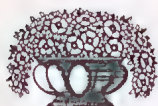
A volunteer group called 707 Operations has restored the City of Melbourne steam train and developed a regular program from Melbourne to Deniliquin. The company responsible for marketing 707 Operations, Australia All Over Pty Ltd, is keen to emulate this service to Albury as well as other destinations within Victoria. One theme they are anxious to develop centres around the Victorian Garden Scheme. A trip for up to 250 people is planned for mid October this year; this could include visits to Bali H'ai (Conargo), Booabula (Wanganella), and Boonoke, Cumbagunda, Nungari and Stud Farm (all near Deniliquin).

Further information can be obtained from Australia All Over Pty Ltd, PO Box 383, Kew, Vic 3101; tel. (03)859.6038, or (008) 800.794.

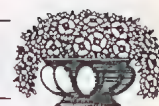
### Cane Toads

Recent sightings of cane toads in the Newcastle area has renewed concern about their invasion southwards. However, according to Wendy Seabrook, who has been researching cane toads at the University of Sydney, these sightings do not represent a new frontier; cane toads have spread into New South Wales, but only as far as just south of Ballina. But they are sometimes transported further south, mainly in garden and construction materials, so there is the potential for them to become established even as far south as Wollongong. To help ensure that new populations of cane toads do not become established the National Parks and Wildlife Service are undertaking a public awareness campaign. This will encourage the nursery, construction and other industries which frequently transport materials south from Queensland to check that they are not carrying cane toads. If people find they have inadvertently introduced cane toads into new areas they should inform their local NPWS office.





## PRODUCT NEWS



### Sun shelters

Sun Shadow Pty Ltd, of Braidwood, NSW, has devised a range of covers based on polyethylene pipe and shade cloth, both materials being long lasting and weather resistant as well as light and easy to erect.

The basic model is 6 metres long, 3.2 metres wide by 2.4 metres high, but these dimensions are easily alterable. The cover is 70 mesh knitted shade cloth but if complete cover is required the structure can be made from a high grade acrylic canvas (Solarstop). The basic model needs no ropes or stays and has been calculated to withstand winds of up to 100 kilometres per hour. It can be delivered to site and erected single handed in less than two hours.

Suggested uses include: car or boat cover; beach house sun shelter; shade house for plants; for caravan or camping ground; on the farm or in your own back yard.

For further details write to Sun Shelter Pty Ltd, Deloraine Galleries, PO Box 101 Braidwood, NSW 2622; tel (048)42.2130.



### Haws watering cans

Products of Excellence Pty Ltd, of Chatswood in New South Wales, have been appointed main Australian importers and distributors for Haws watering cans.

These are recognised worldwide as "the finest watering cans in the world" having been in production for over 100 years. The range span from the 9 litre Professional and Traditional models through to small plastic 0.5 and 1.5 litre indoor cans. At the top of the range are the craftsman made 1 litre pure brass and copper watering cans. Other Haws items include a brass mister and several sprayers.

For further details and list of stockists contact:

Products of Excellence Pty Ltd, PO Box 5247, Chatswood West, NSW 2057; tel and fax (02) 411.5617. For customers outside metropolitan areas, the firm operates a direct mail order service.

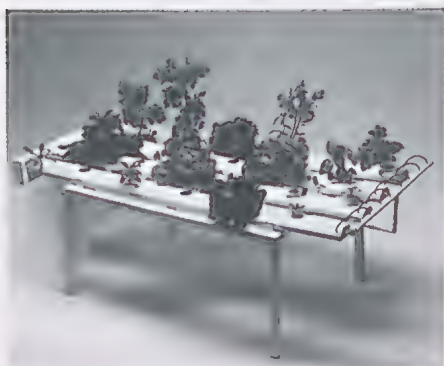


### A hydroponic kit for home gardens

A new mini farm hydroponic kit has now been introduced for those who wish to grow a wide range of vegetables, fruit, flowers and herbs cleanly and at relatively little cost. Apart from being ideally suited to normal home gardens this kit can be used in home units and flats, where there is no access to a garden. Produce can be grown quickly without the need for watering, weeding or tilling.

The kit consists of PVC channelling pigmented with titanium dioxide to reduce the harmful effects of ultra violet rays, which snap together on a stand, a pump and a tank for nutrients. The nutrients are pumped from the tank to the plants, where they drain past the roots back to the tank. The nutrients are changed every 10 to 14 days.

The kit is made by Viplas Olympic, a division of Pacific Dunlop Ltd, and is available from Mite 10, Homestead, Home Saver and Thrifty Link stores, as well as selected local hardware stores and nurseries. Recommended price is \$299.





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# The Golden Oak at Mount Barker, South Australia

by Noel LOTHIAN

**B**ecause of the many beautiful gardens developed by the early settlers to this country, there are many beautiful and unusual trees to be seen in various parts of Australia. Most of these gardens were planted with plants imported either from England or Europe, and frequently "novelties" were requested by the planters.

One such tree is the Golden Oak at Mount Barker, South Australia. It was planted about 1880. Mount Barker is about 35 km south-east of Adelaide in the Adelaide Hills, an area in which a number of the more affluent built summer retreats. Auchendarroch, the garden in which this tree is growing, was developed by Robert Barr Smith, one of South Australia's outstanding pioneers and philanthropists.

In 1854 Robert Barr Smith arrived in Adelaide from Melbourne, to which he had migrated in 1853. He was born in Lochwinnoch, Renfrewshire, Scotland, the son of a Presbyterian minister.

He became involved in commercial pursuits and joined the firm of Elder and Co, becoming a partner a few years later. In 1863 the name of the firm was altered to Elder Smith and Co, and it became one of the biggest mercantile, pastoral, mining, shipping and financial businesses in Australia.

In 1878 he purchased the old coaching inn, Oakfield Hotel, at Mount Barker and engaged an architect to turn it into a mansion of 30 rooms, to which the family retreated during the summer months. With the assistance of his head gardener he carried out an extensive landscaping and planting scheme, including many unusual trees and shrubs, a number of which are still present in the garden today.

Of particular note is the planting of *Quercus robur* 'Concordia', the golden variety of the common English oak. Records indicate that there were either two or three specimens planted, all specially imported from England. Due to various events only one remains; a leaking fuel tank took one plant and later, when the main road was widened, another tree did not survive.

So far as is known it is the largest of its kind in Australia. Although the top was blown off many years ago the scar is still visible — the present height of the tree is about 18 metres, with a similar spread. The trunk diameter is about 60 cm. It is interesting to note that the graft mark between the stock and the scion is clearly visible; in fact there is a small tuft of shoots which produce green leaves, in marked contrast to the colour of the canopy.

Although there is a tendency for the foliage to burn and discolour during the height of summer, until this happens, and especially following the flush of new growth in spring, the tree presents a magnificent sight with its clear yellow foliage.

This variety is very rare in Australia. There is another and smaller specimen in the heritage garden at Beechworth, Stirling, which is under the control of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens, a smaller specimen in the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne, and a few others scattered in South Australia, Victoria and in the Blue Mountains in New

South Wales. It is usually propagated by either budding or grafting onto *Q. robur* stock. Many acorns have been sown from this particular tree, but none of the resultant seedlings has produced coloured leaves. Because of its rarity and outstanding beauty, as well as its historical importance, this tree has been placed on the National Trust's Register of Significant Trees.

The origin of this variety is well documented. It first appeared as a sport in van Geert's nursery at Ghent, about 1843. It reached England in 1868 and in that year was shown by Lee of Hammersmith, when it gained a First Class Certificate. Another variety, "*aurea Leucocarpa*" is considered similar but is no longer in cultivation. Interestingly, the largest specimen in Great Britain measures about 13 metres in height.

My thanks for some of the above information are due to Mr Richard Mills; to the Registrar of the National Trust's Significant Tree Register, Mr Cedric Wells; and from the recently published book "Torrens Park Estate", by K. Preiss and J. Oborn.





# More Plant Profiles

from **Stephen RYAN**, of *Dicksonia Rare Plants*, Mount Macedon.

## An Unlikely Holly

It is always fun to grow a plant from a well known genus that isn't in what is usually considered the classic mould. Many such groups have but one or two often cultivated species, and at least to the uninitiated unless a plant looks like the recognised types, it can't possibly be one.

One such plant is *Ilex verticillata* from North America. It doesn't have spiny holly-like leaves and it isn't even evergreen.

Many customers ask me about the shrub with the lovely red berries, and I invariably get a look of disbelief when I tell them it's a holly.

It may not look all that much like a holly, but it is a useful and attractive shrub for the garden. Plant it in a sunny but moist to wet position (it grows in swampy ground in its native home) and you will end up with a shrub of two or three metres in height, with attractive light green leaves that turn bright yellow in autumn. The masses of berries ripen in late summer and can remain on the plant well into winter, birds allowing. The first year mine fruited I had berries right through to spring but, alas, they have now been discovered by the rosellas so don't last that long any more.

The only drawback with this plant is that, like most other hollies, you need a male and a female to produce fruit at all. (I need hardly point out that it is only the female that produces the fruit). This need not deter you even though the male plant doesn't do anything particularly exciting, because if you plant them both in the one hole with the male at the back the two plants will take up no more room than one would, and the female will disguise her rather drab partner. If you have room you may even like to give him a harem, as one male can service



*Ilex verticillata*

quite a number of productive females.

For a plant that was introduced into England in 1736 and received an Award of Merit in 1962 it is strange that you rarely see it in gardens here.

## A Wing and a Prayer

At the very first plant sale at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne, I was wandering around with an itchy cheque book and a lusty glint in my eye, selecting all sorts of strange plants I hadn't seen before, when I came across a small plant called *Heteropteris angustifolia*. It was obviously a climber, but the list only confirmed this fact and told me that it came from sub-tropical areas of Brazil.

No one was showing much interest in it and its origin didn't fill me with hope as far as growing it at Mount Macedon was concerned. But I thought, well, if it does survive it may turn out all right, or I can always pull it out — and anyway the money is going to a good cause.

It was duly planted in a well drained sunny aspect on the front of my tool shed, and has grown well ever since.

Growth has proved to be vigorous without becoming overbearing, its pleasant rich green foliage is bronze tinged while young, and it has turned out to be deciduous — the first winter I wasn't sure whether it was dying or not.



In its second year it started to bloom, and although the bright yellow flowers were small, they were produced in abundance, from before Christmas right through till the frosts started. However, the lovely bronze-red winged seeds started to form quite quickly after the first flowers had faded, and then I knew I was on to a winner.

The mixture of yellow flowers and red maple-like seeds, set off by the rich foliage, looked great. My customers obviously thought so too, as I have been plagued by requests for a plant by almost every one.

My biggest problem was to find information on the genus, as all I could find was in the RHS Dictionary of Gardening, which told me that it was a genus of 90 or so climbing plants from South America, belonging to the family Malpighiaceae. The only other genus of this family with which I was familiar was *Stigmaphyllon*, also a climber and one which I cannot grow.

I do feel sorry for those who plan their gardens and don't try an occasional unknown plant. I know that sometimes they can turn out to be a bit of a yawn, but the excitement of discovering an unknown treasure must surely be one of the highlights of gardening.

Now all I have to do is to propagate enough *Heteropteris angustifolia* to meet the demand.



*Heteropteris angustifolia*

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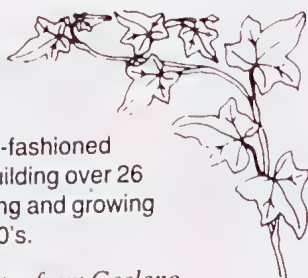
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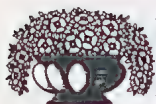
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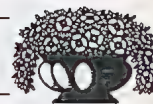
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### SHOWS

**AFRICAN VIOLET SHOW**, Saturday 9th and Sunday 10th May, Harvey Lowe Pavilion, Castle Hill Showground, Castle Hill, NSW. The African Violet Association of Australia, 20 Howard St, Strathfield West, 2140.

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS, Home & Overseas

### MAY

**Until 10th June:** Gumnut Town Exhibition at Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney. Explores the impact of May Gibbs with a wide range of her writings and illustrations, including some 30 original watercolours and drawings from the State Library collection.

**Until 11th October:** Floriade 1992, Zoetermeer, Netherlands.

**Until 12th October:** Ameriflora '92, Columbia Park, Ohio.

**1st May to 27th Oct:** Garden Festival Wales, Ebbw Vale, Gwent, Wales; open 10am to 7pm May/Sept-Oct, 10am to 8pm June/July/Aug.

**3rd May:** OPCA Subscribers Group Autumn Tour to the *Calluna* Collection at Ferny Creek and the George Tindale Memorial Garden.

**9th and 10th May:** African Violet Association of Australia Inc Annual Show, Harvey Lowe Pavilion, Castle Hill Showground, Castle Hill, NSW; Saturday 1pm to 5pm, Sunday 10am to 5pm.

**12th to 15th and 17th to 20th May:** International Flower Bulbs Symposium, Poland and the Netherlands. Contact R. Bogers, Box 85, 260 AB Lisse, Netherlands.

**15th to 17th May:** Cairns Tropical Garden Expo, Queensland. Enquiries Kevin Holmes (070) 54.1325.

**18th to 24th May:** Rhododendron Conference, Bad Zwischenahn, Germany. Contact Prof. W. Spethmann, Hanover University, Am-Steinberg 3, D-3203 Sarstedt, Germany.

**19th to 22nd May:** Chelsea Flower Show, in the grounds of the Royal Hospital Chelsea. 19th, 20th and 21st, RHS members only; open to non-members after 3.30pm 21st and 8am to 5pm 22nd. Tickets should be purchased in advance from Royal Horticultural Society, 80 Vincent Square, London SW1P 2PE; 24 hour information on (071) 828.1744.

**21st to 24th May:** Festival of Herbs and Fragrance; four days of free lectures and demonstrations at The Fragrant Garden, Portsmouth Road, Erina, NSW.

**22nd to 24th May:** International Plant Propagators Society 20th Annual Conference: "Propagation in the 90s"; Ballina, NSW. Enquiries John Bunker (07) 206.7611.

**26th May:** OPCA Subscribers' Group Lecture "Abutilons" by Les Marshall, National Herbarium, Birdwood Ave, South Yarra, 7.30pm.

### JUNE

**6th to 10th June:** 1992 Pacific Rim International Horticultural Exhibition, Juan de Fuca Recreation Centre, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. Enquiries Rosamund McLean, 1022 Cook St, Victoria, BC V8V 3Z5, Canada.

**22nd to 28th June:** Sunshine Coast Home Garden Expo. Enquiries Jill Scott (074) 46.7815.

### AUGUST

**8th to 11th Aug:** Hardware and Garden Show, Royal Exhibition Centre, Wayville, SA. Enquiries Geoff Millard, Exhibitions and Trade Fairs Pty Ltd, 6 Grenfell St, Kent Town, SA 5067; tel (08) 362.9966; fax (08) 362.9994.

**19th Aug:** OPCA Subscribers' Group AGM, including "Meet the Collectors", "A Wealth of Antipodean Plants for OPCA Collections" by Rodger Elliot, and plant auction.

### SEPTEMBER

**1st to 4th Sept:** International Geranium Conference, Hans Christian Andersen Centre, Odense, Fyn, Denmark.

**25th to 28th Sept:** Third Australian International Herb Conference, Brisbane Boys' College, Kensington Terrace, Toowong, Qld. Enquiries Mrs Barbara Wickes, 26 Ripicola Place, Chapel Hill, Qld 4069; tel (07) 378.2075.

**30th Sept to 3rd Oct:** Conference "The Culture of Landscape Architecture, EDGE TOO", organised by students from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and the University of Melbourne. Enquiries to the Convenors, Landscape Architecture Students Conference, Faculty of Environmental Design and Construction, RMIT, GPO Box 2476V, Melbourne, 3001; or School of Environmental Planning, University of Melbourne, Parkville, 3052.

### OCTOBER

**30th Oct and 1st Nov:** Cassilis Open Gardens Weekend. Seven gardens open with lunch and refreshments available as well as garden stalls and plant sales. Enquiries Winks Armstrong (063) 76.1163 or Anne Reynolds (065) 48.7218.

### NOVEMBER

**12th to 13th Nov:** Spring garden tour in and around Bowral — Gardentours — tel (048) 61.4999 office hours.

*News items for inclusion in "Calendar of Events; Home and Overseas" must reach our editorial office by letter or fax no less than seven weeks before the first day of the month of issue.*



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### OTHER TOURS ARRANGED

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- Yass gardens in November.

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AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1992

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**Editor**

**TIM NORTH**

**Art, Circulation and Subscriptions**  
**ANN FOGARTY**

**National Advertising Director**  
**KEVA NORTH**

**Advertising, Victoria**  
**Lesley de Meyrick,**  
17 Hampden Rd, Armadale, Vic 3143  
tel (03) 509.4484

**Advertising, South Australia**  
**Pam Gurner-Hall,**  
PO Box 54, Littlehampton, SA 5250  
tel (08) 391.2037 (home)  
(08) 388.7439 (business)

**Editorial Advisory Board**

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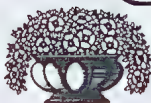
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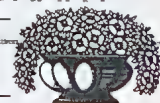
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Front cover: The garden at Delgany Country House Hotel, Portsea. photo by Keva North



## In Our Next Issue —

- Professor George SEDDON writes about the making of his garden overlooking the Port of Freemantle, a garden in the Mediterranean style yet eclectic in the choice of plants.
- Bruce J. KNIGHT asks "Why not Watsonias?" and describes 14 of the 55 species of this South African genus of cormose plants.
- Tom CROSSEN takes us to one of the showplaces of the Canadian Pacific Northwest, the Butchart Gardens at Victoria, British Columbia.
- Nancy BECKHAM helps to unravel some of the mysteries of Companion Planting, Stephen RYAN has some more of his Plant Profiles, and Gail THOMAS describes some country gardens in the Birregurra district of Victoria —
- and for our Lady Gardener and our Artist in the Garden, The Garden Journal visits Tasmania —
- plus the usual book reviews, Garden Cuttings, and much more —

all in the October/November issue of

*The Australian  
Garden Journal*

on sale approximately  
30th September.



## Computers or Dibbles?

Electronics, I have to admit, is something about which I find it hard to become enthusiastic. It's not that I don't marvel at what it (or should it be they?) can achieve, it's just that I find it all totally beyond my comprehension. Never will I have the slightest idea about how computers compute or faxes fax. All I do know is that without them life would be considerably more difficult.

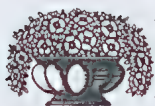
I sometimes wonder, however, whether, as we become more and more dependent on this modern technology, we are tending to lose sight of some of the simple but useful things that we, or perhaps our parents, once enjoyed.

I started thinking about this the other day as I was sweeping up the autumn leaves, always a major chore in our rather large garden. The modern wheelbarrow is useless for this; even an "industrial strength" model just doesn't hold enough, so we pile the leaves onto an old sheet and hump them on our backs to the compost heap that way. That's fine when the leaves are dry, but hard work when they are wet. But once upon a time — and you will have to allow me a few minutes of nostalgia — wheelbarrows were made of wood, had four right-angled corners, and came with a sort of extension, a wooden frame that fitted on the top. This almost doubled their capacity, and was a huge boon when raking up leaves or lawn clippings. Modern wheelbarrows just don't lend themselves to that sort of adaptation.

Then there was the row marker, so simple that I could make one myself — well, almost. In the form of a rake, it had pointed pegs instead of tines, and marked out any number of equally spaced and parallel seed rows in one operation. Has anyone seen one recently? What about that supremely simple garden tool, the dibble (or dibber, if you prefer)? You can make one by sharpening the top half of an old spade handle, but last year I was given a really splendid one as a birthday present — polished wood, graduated in inches so that you can make a hole to exactly the required depth (dibbles, being old-fashioned, clearly disdain metrics). It's so special that I haven't yet brought myself to stick it in the dirt. Who sells dibbles to-day? And when did you last see a billhook, or a bagging hook?

Fortunately, a few of the old stalwarts are still around, like the Haws watering can, now making a welcome comeback. Has anyone with their computer magic designed a better one? I don't think so. ➡





HELENE WILD is an artist currently working on two series of Australian native orchid watercolours — “Native Orchids of Victorian National and State Parks” and “Victorian Orchid Species Illustrated”, the latter to be reproduced in “**The Orchadian**”, the national journal of the Australasian Native Orchid Society. Helene is also Editor of the ANOS Victorian Group’s monthly bulletin, a position which she has held for the past two years. Growing up within a family passionately interested in natural history and gardening, it is not surprising that Helene has been able to incorporate these interests in her paintings.

GAIL THOMAS is a chef who gardens, rather than a gardener who cooks. She has published two books, **A Gourmet Harvest**, which deals with interesting fruits and

vegetables which can be grown at home or purchased, and **Australia’s Gourmet Resources**, which covers the specialty producers in Australia in aquaculture, game (both furred and feathered) and the range of sheep, goat and cow’s milk cheeses. Both books include a number of recipes using the products mentioned.

She takes all the photographs for her articles and books herself, with the exception of the larger studio shots. The vegetables she grows in her own garden are used mainly for her research into their culinary applications. Consequently most of her garden interests and knowledge are with the edible varieties of plants rather than with the floral and visual effects of gardens, although she does grow a range of edible flowers to use in her menus.

### *Computers or Dibbles?, continued from page 212*

There are a few old gardening techniques and crafts that should not be forgotten. Nathan Perkins, in his two articles in this journal (the second is in this issue) brings new life to the ancient but most practical craft of dry stone walling. The response to his first article was so great that he is now thinking of extending his courses into New South Wales. Where I live you can still see “cut-and-laid” hawthorn hedges, but can anyone make a cobblestone path to-day? How often does one see coppicing and pollarding **correctly** done? Does anyone put grease bands on fruit trees anymore? It was a bit messy, but it worked and it was very cheap. Perhaps they may come back now we are moving away from the “kill-em-all-kwik” spray technique.

I was about to say that, while most of the super technology seems to come from Japan and most of the really durable garden tools from Germany, the old-fashioned gadgets seem, in the main, to come — dare I say it? — from Great Britain. But that is not entirely correct, as, also in this issue, we bring you news of an ingenious little tool that Asian gardeners have apparently been using for a few centuries. It’s called a Ho-Mi which is almost a good enough reason in itself for wanting to buy one.

It’s good to know that there are still a few things we can do without a computer.

*“Through cunning with dibble, rake, mattock and spade,  
By line and by levell, trim garden is made.”*

(from Thomas Tusser’s “A Hundred Good Points of Husbandrie”, published in 1597.

**TIM NORTH**

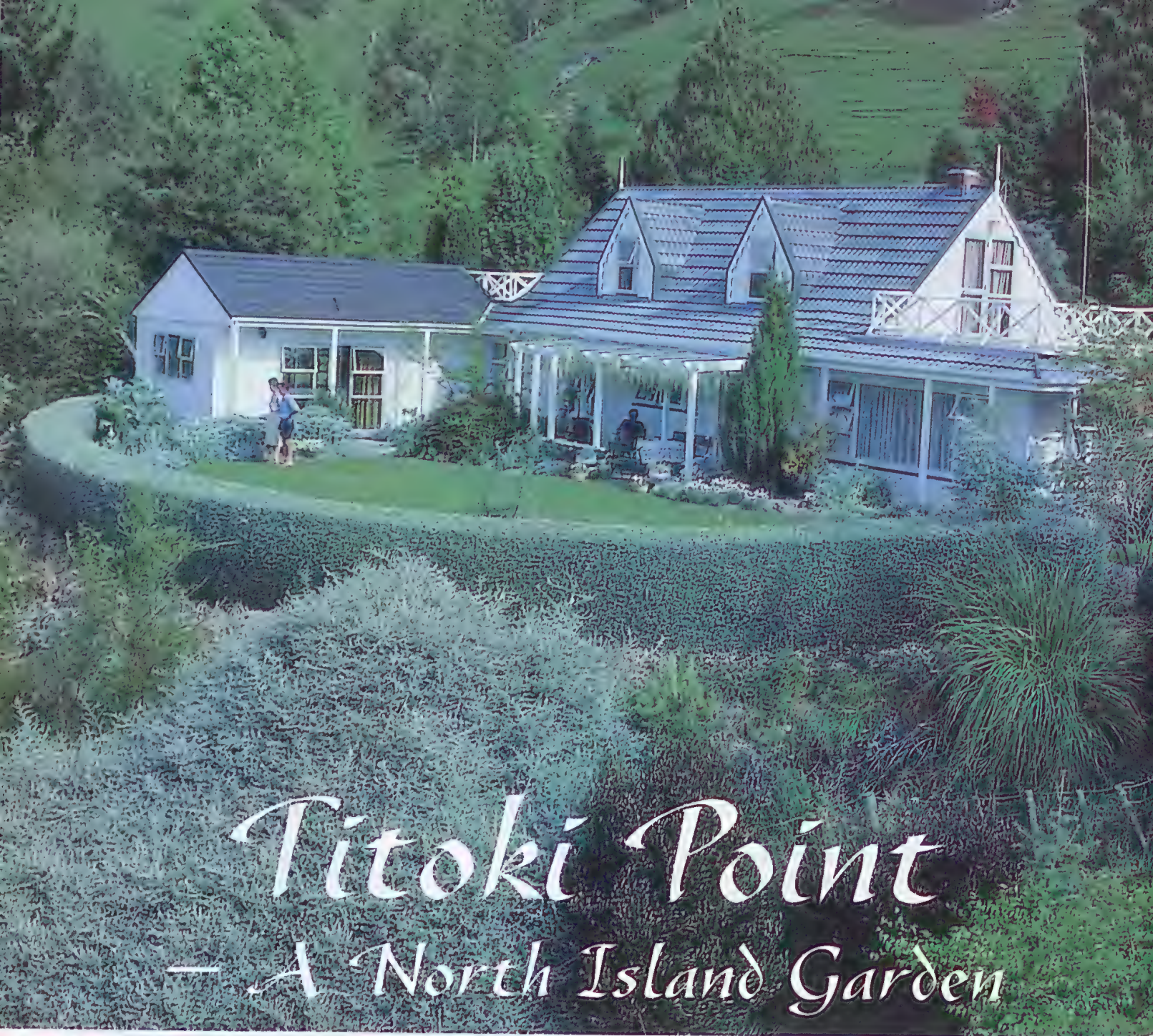
### Two Great Gardening Weekends in New South Wales



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# Titoki Point

## — A North Island Garden

*Gordon COLLIER, describes his garden at Taihape, New Zealand.*

**M**y garden is certainly off the beaten track. Visitors exclaiming on its remote location are often told they are standing in the very centre of the North Island. This is not too far from the truth, as the property lies only 25km due south of Mount Rauapehu and is easily reached by turning west from State Highway 1 just south of Waiouru. The mention of this army town implies a cold miserable climate but this is not the case, and as the garden matures it also creates its own microclimate. We receive a fairly evenly spread rainfall of, on average, 960 mm. Seldom do we experience more than 10 degree frost. Although snowfalls are expected in winter they are of no consequence. The high hills in

this part of New Zealand shelter the garden from prevailing westerly winds and our trees grow tall and straight. Lying just off the rim of the Central Plateau we do not enjoy the light volcanic loam of the nearby Waimarino Plain. In fact the soil here has proved to be the worst obstacle to be overcome, consisting mostly of sticky clay that is difficult to work in winter and which dries out severely in summer. The very steep nature of the site has been the other big disadvantage.

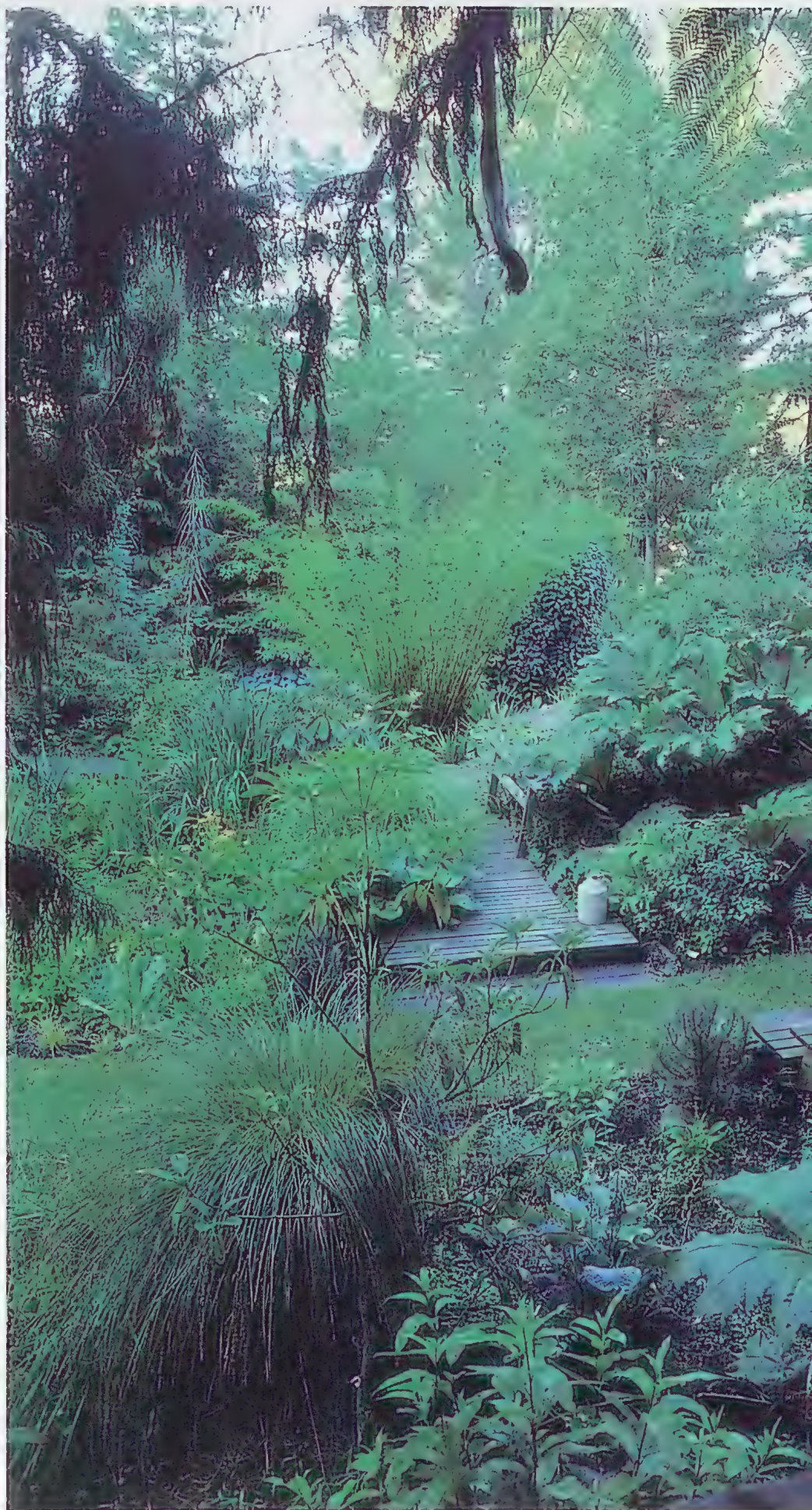
When I married in 1965, these few acres were easily surveyed off the farm and lay adjacent to the bottom of the homestead garden which I had been working on for the past few years. In this older area there grew a fair





(above) The house and grey garden at Titoki Point. The curving hedge is *Teucrium fruticans*.

(right) In the bog garden at Titoki Point, noted for the use of diverse foliage forms.







number of Californian redwoods, *Sequoia sempervirens*, which, planted in 1923, were now magnificent specimens adding strength and maturity — a fine start.

Those first few years provided a rude awakening, as a series of summer droughts soon dispelled my dreams of drifts of rhododendrons. So the battle to create a garden commenced.

The most difficult lesson to be learned lay in choosing plants for particular sites. I could not grow the plants I wanted but within the new boundary fences lay a wide variety of ground conditions and aspects to be explored.

At the foot of the garden, adjacent to the main entrance, there lay a small area of deep boggy soil which was to provide a home for many moisture-and

shade-loving plants. Thirty years later (this area was already partly developed) “the bog” has become the most successful and distinctive area of Tikoki Point. Here, growing in happy association, are a wide range of ferns, grasses, irises, ligularias, primulas, hostas, and other moisture-loving plants. A keen liking for foliage plants has led to the interest being extended beyond the spring period.

Hostas, those most noble of perennial garden plants, grow especially well, particularly with the provision of shade and some moisture. In the bog, the perfect situation presented itself. Thus a fairly big collection has been acquired, numbering over 150 named varieties. Many of these have been imported from England and America but there are other gardeners in



(top left) *Arthropodium cirratum* with the New Zealand fern *Phynatosorus diversifolius*.

(top right) Both species of this showy aroid romp in the ditches in the bog garden. *Lysichitum americanum*, the yellow, hybridizes with Asian cousin *L. camtschaticense*, the white flowered species.

(below left) Ferns, hostas and native grasses flank the steps to the summer house.

photos Gordon Collier and  
Julian Matthews.



New Zealand happy to exchange. *Hosta sieboldiana* var. *elegans* has grown to form magnificent mounds of grey foliage rivalled only by its sibling. 'Frances Williams' with blue leaves edged yellow. The late Hugh Redgrove, who was responsible for introducing many fine plants to our gardens raised a fine gold-leaved version of the miniature 'Kabitan', a seedling appropriately named 'Goldmine'.

Rivalling hostas for foliage effect are the rodgersias, members of the Saxifrage family which enjoy the wettest margins of the bog. *R. cabularis* the finest species, with large peltate leaves, does not like me at all, and after repeated plantings over many years, has yet to be established. Lysichitums, both the yellow and white flowered species, romp in the ditches, and ostrich fern, *Matteuccia struthiopteris*, makes an imposing colony nearby.

The undoubted king of the bog garden is a huge clump of the giant South American perennial *Gunnera tinctoria* (syn. *chilensis*). But even it is soon to be overshadowed by a seedling of its relative, *G. manicata*, which is even larger in leaf and quite distinct in form. Of these two giants, I favour the latter though it is not common in the North Island. Other species happily accommodated on the margin of an artificial stream, small plants indeed, include *G. prorepens*, *monoica*, *flavida*, *mixta*, and *hamiltonii*. Of these a large-fruited form *prorepens* is the most worthwhile. Its bright red fruits are a feature of the autumn scene. A little humus added as a mulch helps to protect the tiny corms from winter cold.

No bog garden would be complete without generous plantings of Candelabra primulas. These look most effective when planted in large drifts of the same colour or species. This is a discipline I am still trying to achieve. *Primula pulverulenta* with familiar wine-coloured tiers is most successful and is generous with self-sown seedlings. Not so *P. helodoxa* and *P. prolifera* two fine yellows. These make good clumps nevertheless. *Primula* 'Inverewe' came to me from England many years ago and a colony of this is a fine sight of spring. This sterile hybrid from that famous Scottish garden has flowers of a vibrant brick-red colour; it can be increased only by division. Flowering at Christmas and on into summer are lush groups of the Himalayan *P. floriandae* of copper colour and sweet fragrance. A particularly fine form of its kin, *P. sikkimensis* 'Crimson and Gold' flowers on into autumn.

The water garden is sited to the side of the bog, and consists of a series of ponds linked by a tiny stream. I find this a very satisfying form of gardening. The degree of maintenance required is not excessive. Because the ponds and stream are constructed of concrete, a great deal of cunning was required to conceal this artificiality, using stones, wood, and plants so arranged as to convey a natural appearance. The calthas are good for covering the raw edges, especially the vigorous *C. polypetala*. Recently acquired, the more genteel *C. palustris* would be better suited to smaller gardens. Its white form, while not a showy plant, flowers spasmodically through summer and autumn,

and the double form turns on a dazzling display in spring. Plastic vessels are used as containers for plants in the body of the pool. Empty drench cans from the farm are ideal, with the sides removed with a sharp knife. Two special plants here are the bold water canna, *Thalia dealbata*, and *Iris pseudacorus variegata*.

Areas surrounding the bog and water garden are planted with a wide variety of trees, shrubs, and ferns. A poolside combination that works well features the tightly weeping willow *Salix caprea* 'Pendula'; *Arundinaria falcata*, a bamboo so graceful and attractive year round; and nearby a specimen of *Cornus controversa*, with contrasting tabulate branching.

Rhododendrons are planted wherever possible although they are not allowed to dominate. A thirty-year-old specimen of the big-leaved *Rhododendron magnificum* is the most successful species grown. A hybrid of great merit growing nearby, and a particularly fine plant in this instance, is *R. loderi* 'Irene Stead'. This is a yearly sensation when in bloom.

Small growing rhododendrons and associated shrubs, together with choice bulbs and woodland plants, are grouped on a series of wide terraces, shaded by a further group of redwoods. This area is a feature in spring, but took a great deal of hard work to complete as all the soil had to be brought in. Ancient "logs" of *Dicksonia fibrosa* contain the planting beds and look very natural.

Trilliums are amongst the most satisfying plants to grow in association with rhododendrons and thrive on these terraces. *Trillium vaseyi*, a recently acquired species, flowered for the first time last season. This late blooming beauty from Eastern U.S.A. has very large deep maroon-red blossoms reflexed beneath a parasol of green leaves and makes an impressive accent plant. So too does a fine colony of the magnificent form of *T. grandiflorum* 'Flora Plenum', known in England where my original plant came from as 'Snow Bunting'. The type species is considered to be the most garden-worthy of all and increases steadily. Another exceptional trillium acquired from Mr. Ed Dunn, Seattle, U.S.A., is *T. cernuum*. Planted together, these two forms immediately produced a good crop of seed after years of infertility. Commonly grown in New Zealand, *T. chloropetalum* is a fine plant in its best forms varying in colour from white to "green" to red. This species is much confused with *T. sessile* even in its homeland.

Leaving trilliums aside, albeit reluctantly, the uncommon *Rhododendron pendulum* is prominently sited on the lowest terrace. Belonging to the Edgeworthia subsection it is remarkable for its woolly branchlets and densely woolly undersurfaces of the leaves. My plant has small white flowers and bears a superficial resemblance to *R. leucaspis*.

The house and the upper levels of the garden are reached by a long curving flight of steps flanked on either side with weeping maples. The commencement of this steep climb is punctuated by a pair of *Rhododendron* 'Rubicon', a locally raised hybrid which I rate very highly. ➡



Conditions at the very top of the garden are quite different from those so far described. Full exposure to the sun and limited topsoil resulted in a harsh environment. Here was an opportunity to use a completely different range of plants. The resultant "grey" garden provides a welcome change of pace and colour. The garden room concept is further developed by an enclosing hedge of *Teucrium fruticans*. This hedge is the subject of much enquiry and comment, particularly from English visitors to the garden.

Often mistaken for the silver pear, the so-called Russian olive, *Elaeagnus angustifolia*, occupies centre stage. This makes an excellent specimen, its soft grey leaves are resistant to wind, drought and disease, and it can easily be pruned to a desired shape. Borders in front of the house contain a range of grey-leaved plants; shrubs include *Senecio greyii*, *Convolvulus cneorum*, *Artemisia 'Powis'* and *Genista monosperma*. A special shrub is *Pinus culminicola*, a dwarf pine with grey needles, seed of which was sent to me by Sir Harold Hillier after his last plant safari to Mexico.

Planted in association are all manner of grey-leaved perennials from the tall *Onopordon acanthium* and *Macleaya cordata* to the lowly non-flowering form of *Stachys olympica* 'Silver Carpet'. Other stachys grown include *S. 'Shelia McQueen'*, with intensely silver leaves, and, recently imported from Beth Chatto, the curious but attractive *S. 'Cotton Boll'*. From the same source came *Artemisia 'Valerie Finnis'*, a particularly attractive plant that should soon be freely available. The pure white-flowered form of *Lathyrus latifolius* performs magnificently in mid-summer. Later on, when flowering is past, its long growths can be shortened back without harming its perennial root stock.

The grey garden is particularly effective on a fine day, standing as it does at the head of the valley and commanding a wonderful view of Mt Ruapehu. With the clipped hedge in front, and white wooden house behind, one does have the illusion of being in a garden room.

One of my chief gardening aims has been to cover the floor of the garden with foliage of one form or

another for as long as possible. This has led to large areas being planted with planned groups of selected subjects, the size of the group depending on the scale of the area in question. These massed plantings create a sense of space and unity. Frequently, these areas require little maintenance if a wise plant choice has been made.

Particularly effective in flower at Christmas are massed planting of *Arthropodium cirratum*. A plant of great merit, this native has strap-like leaves attractive all year round. Three forms, in addition to the type species, are growing at Titoki Point. *Arthropodium* grows naturally on maritime sites and can withstand long periods of drought, and so I have used it extensively as a ground cover plant under tall trees. Plants that will tolerate dry shade are particularly valuable. Another in this category, used under redwoods, is *Phlomis russeliana*. The native fern *Phymatosorus diversifolius* has spread itself to cover a very large area alongside a broad drift of *Arthropodium*, fortuitous but most effective. A copse of *Betula papyrifera*, sited on a steep clay bank, looks particularly well underplanted with a large drift of agapanthus in shades of blue. Nearby, a massed planting of *Hypericum Sungold* spills over a difficult sunny bank edged with a foreground of that hardy perennial *Bergenia cordifolia*.

Titoki Point is now approaching maturity. With the removal of fillers, and limbing up of the trees, opportunities are created for further plants to be added to the range grown.

Gardening is an art form dealing with living material and presenting endless opportunities for self-expression. As the years pass, plants mature, pass their best, and are replaced by others. The picture changes. A difficult site like this one makes the challenge greater and even more rewarding.



**Note:** this article has been adapted from one originally published in the Journal of the Dunedin Rhododendron Group and is reproduced here with the permission of that organization.



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# Without Prejudice — the Cream Theme

*Kay OVERELL is born again — in cream.*

When I was a child I didn't eat rice, I didn't eat potato salad, I didn't eat olives, I didn't eat this and I didn't eat that.

It was the same when I began gardening. As repulsive as rice pudding I considered any plants bearing red leaves, variegated leaves, fleshy leaves or spikey shapes.

Nowadays my outlook is not so narrow. Red leaves or cream ones, spikey shapes or fleshy tissue, I see the point of it all. Just as I see the point of strong black coffee, salad laced with Spanish onion, and fish fresh and raw and dunked in green mustard. (Although this evolved cosmopolitan taste I drew the line at tiny, tiny bright orange fish thrashing out their last minutes in a bowl set in front of me in a sushi bar in Fujisawa City. The point there being the thrill as the tiny orange ones kicked against suffocation during their descent down your throat. Having had the thrill explained to me I nearly fainted. But don't get on your cultural high horse until I tell you that likewise a Japanese girl shrieked in horror when presented with the idea of eating cooked pig skin, albiet crunchy and going under the euphemism of "crackling").

The person I've become particularly sees the point of variegated leaves. The colour cream is the hook, cream flowers and leaves splashed with it, especially the leaves. I've been born again and cream is the theme, soft soothing warm cream.

The conversion to cream being complete, like all the converted I have developed an impatience with what was before, with what I now see as an immature horticultural palate. Imagine the raised eyebrow when I read Mirabel Osler admitting to a prejudice against variegated leaves. Diseased, she said they appeared. A gentle plea for cream in the landscape, says I.

Mirabel Osler is the person I was and displaying yet another characteristic of the born again. I've become hypocritical. A raised eyebrow indeed when in this very Journal I can remember years ago writing of my loathing of the variegation in *Abutilon megapotamicum*. Diseased, said I. Naturally, now I grow *A. megapotamicum* and admire its accidental pairing with the white cream in *Chlorophytum*, another plant I had long despised.

It was Roberto Burle Marx who brought me to appreciate variegated *Chlorophytum*. Any plant he uses has to be looked at and considered carefully. He uses broad sweeps of it and it alone, which is all very well if you're a Cubist. I, however, am a Romantic Realist and therefore must find and plant *Chlorophytum* with its perfect partner. In my opinion a plant which I believe to be *Hymenocallis littoralis* *Chlorophytum*'s perfect partner. The plant I am calling *H. littoralis* is evergreen, bulbous, about the same size as an *Agapanthus* and which in almost complete dryish shade throws up white, Peruvian daffodil-ish flowers in Sydney in December/January. This plant looks wonderful interplanted with *Chlorophytum*.

In the vicinity of my now treasured *A. megapotamicum* there is another variegated plant, *Schefflera arboricola* 'Jacqueline'. In this garden the present count of cream and green specimens of 'Jacqueline' is five and I've drawn the line on it — no more. Five is enough. Especially when I have no idea how 'Jacqueline' will grow and ultimately look. But what is life for if not to take chances?

'Jacqueline' was brought home from the indoor plant sections of landscape supermarkets and planted in the ground in both the shady side of semi-shade and the sunny side of semi-shade. Heavily mulched in humus rich sand she has made it clear she prefers the sunny side of semi-shade.

Creamy 'Jacqueline' in one scheme has a *Kentia* palm and a cream *Poinsettia* behind her, yellow-flowered shrimp plant about her, 'Pretty in Pink' *Catharanthus* (*Vinca rosea*) in front of her as well as a standard "Fairy" rose and yellow marjoram. (Both yellow marjoram and the yellow shrimp plant turn a lovely limey green out of hard sun.) In another scheme 'Jacqueline' has yellow frilly *Hibiscus* behind her, *Heliotrope* about her and dwarf *Agapanthus* in front of her. In another place I have repeated her colours with a variegated *Pandorea jasminoides* which goes under the name 'Charisma'.

Now those who were hating me for not having mentioned a single native can relax. 'Charisma' is a best beloved. Kept out of full sun where the cream variegations curdle to an ugly yellow I am keen enough about this plant to have planted it in three different locations. The sunny side of semi-shade is best and with such a handsome leaf who cares if you ever see that insipid pink flower. (Although now that there is a beautiful deep pink-flowered form of *P. jasminoides* perhaps we will be able to get that with variegations as well.) You can take 'Charisma' into the shady side of semi-shade — just. But if you do it's dead slow ahead in the growth department. In one scheme I have a summery tangle of 'Charisma'; a peach-flowered *Oleander*; a *Frangipani*, all underplanted with a blue-flowering variegated *Vinca major* and *Convolvulus mauretanicus*. In another scheme I have 'Charisma' on a fence along with another best beloved, the yellow-flowered *Gelsemium sempervirens*. In this same bed there is a cream *Poinsettia*, pink *Pentas*, a golden cane palm and a yellow-flowered *Tecoma stans* which won't flower for ages because so out of fashion are tropical plants in Sydney that I had to gather seed and grow it myself. Its about ten inches high. ➡




(So is the Golden Cane palm. If you plan on palms take Valerie Swane's advice and buy advanced. All the palms I've put in are agonisingly slow).

Another variegated climber for which I have a passion is a form of *Trachelospermum jasminoides*. I have stopped at two specimens for it also seems a dead slow grower. Again it seems happier in the sunny side of semi-shade but I also have it on the shady side. (If I'm boring you with these fine calibrations of shade I do so because that's mostly what I garden in having too many tall, but mostly flimsy casuarinas to talk simply of full sun). I used to long for more full sun positions but I don't care anymore. The reality of semi-shade has forced a focus on foliage and plant shape rather than flowers, and its opened up a new way of solving problems. The thing about relying on flowers is that they mask a lot of mistakes, a lot of plants chosen erratically and thrown together, in the way that the ubiquitous cream sauce will so often mask inferior cooking ingredients.)

Variegated *T. jasminoides* in one position looks good with pure white *Catharanthus* (*Vinca rosea*) and in another place I have it with white tree Begonias. Again it doesn't matter if it ever flowers, the leaves maturing through such a complex symphony of white, cream, pink and bronze — stunning!

A climber which would have made the skin creep of the person I used to be is variegated *Senecio mikanooides*, creamy splashes and fleshy leaves. It keeps its variegation in full shade, lighting up the green gloom, but it's very slow. I fuss around it urging it on ("Is there anything more I can get you? Some chlorophyll perhaps?"). It hasn't flowered yet but that's not its job. I have a plain green version for that (weedy, yes, but it's fast even in full shade and with all the slow aristocrats I put up with there has to be something quick to keep the spirits up, and who can resist that dear cream daisy flower it puts out in dark July). In front of *S. mikanooides* variegated there is a drift of yellow-flowered shrimp plant —

which will flower in shady semi-shade, it's much slower and the flowers fewer but more handsome, looking a lot less hot and bothered and yellow than they do in too much sun. This scheme carries on into a triangle of *Phoenix roebellini* underplanted with variegated liriopoe. These last two look very handsome together probably because *P. roebellini* having a cream flower looks well underplanted with cream variegations. Also there is a repetition of a vaguely rosette shape between the liriopoe and the immature palms. This is another thing I learned from Roberto Burle Marx, that the repetition of shape in different species is a great force for unity.

So there remains just the one variegated plant I have yet to come to terms with — *Aucuba japonica*. I read somewhere that Andrew Pfeiffer in a moment of aesthetic revelation in a chic arrondissement in Paris was able to "see" it anew. So perhaps I too will have such a moment and if so I certainly hope it happens in Paris because if it does this food metaphor will be carried to its ultimate conclusion. 

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The designers, Dorrough Britz and Associates, whose managing partners were instrumental in the landscape design and construction for the new Parliament House, have created an intriguing new landscape design for Floriade 1992. Archways and passages will line the pathways and the flower beds will contrast against the intricate parterre gardens and topiary, with broad sweeps of vivid colour in bold design. Using some rare and unusual varieties of bulbs and annuals the massive floral display around Nerang Pool will cover an area even larger than that of 1991.

On 10th and 11th October Canberra's Leisure and Lifestyle Expo will be held in the National Convention Centre, and on 11th October, between 10 am and 5 pm, Canberra's oldest building, Duntroon House, will open its rooms and landscaped gardens to the public.

For general information on Floriade call the Floriade Hotline on (008)020141, local callers on (06)257.5092.

The Horticultural Society of Canberra will be holding the following special events during Floriade:

12th and 13th Sept: Spring Bulb and Camellia Show, incorporating the Australian Daffodil Championships, Albert Hall, Commonwealth Avenue, Yarralumla. Enquiries (06)258.3270.

3rd and 4th Oct: Open Gardens in Canberra; admission \$2 to each garden. Enquiries (06)248.6235.

10th and 11th Oct: Open Gardens in Queanbeyan; admission \$2 to each garden. Enquiries as above.

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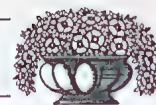
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***Beach Plants of South Eastern Australia***

by Roger Carolin and Peter Clarke; published by Sainty and Associates, 1991; recommended retail price \$22.95.

reviewed by Tim North

Most Australians take our beaches and surf for granted, seldom realising that some of the most important elements in the stability of these sandy coasts are plants.

Beach plant communities range from grassland to coastal rainforest; much of the original dune vegetation has been destroyed or disturbed by housing developments, grazing, waste disposal and intensive recreational use. Unfortunately, many dune plants have a limited capacity to recover once their habitat is disturbed.

This small book, written by two experts in this field, is therefore timely and important. The first part outlines the environment in which dune plants grow, the types of plant communities and the methods by which dune vegetation can be preserved; the second part is a field guide to the common plants to be found on our south eastern coastline.

The book is well set out, easy to read and there are a number of excellent colour plates.

***Perennials***

***(2 vols. — Early Perennials, Late Perennials)***

by Roger Phillips and Martyn Rix; published by Pan Garden Series 1991; recommended retail price \$45.00 each vol.

reviewed by Trevor Nottle

These two volumes follow the now familiar format of lavish colour photographs, mostly close-up portraits accompanied by expanded captions which give concise descriptive and cultural information. The pages are peppered with photographs of plants growing in their natural habitats and many of these are either recently discovered or newly introduced into gardens. Selecting plants which could be expected to do well under local conditions is a bit hap-

azard as the cultural information focuses on minimum temperature. The fairly frequent appearance of the phrase "for moist rich soils" may offer a warning concerning the suitability of some entries however those for Euphorbia, Helleborus, Iris Paeonia, Acanthus, Eryngium and other tried and true plants offer some new surprises which could be worth pursuing. I refer to *Acanthus syriacus*, *Acanthus hirsutus* and *Acanthus dioscoridis*, *Helleborus vesicarius* and *Helleborus multifidus* subsp. *multifidus* as plants that particularly caught my eye. The general information concerning the origins of perennials, propagation and their use in gardens is so brief as to be of very limited use as would the rather patchy information about sources of perennials in Australia — our largest and most imaginative suppliers are omitted.

With over 2,500 plants shown in coloured pictures these books will give pleasure to many keen gardeners. Read carefully they could provide the basis for some useful plant introductions to our own warm, dry gardens.

***The Story of Gardening***

by Martin Hoyles; published by Journeyman Press, 1991

reviewed by Trevor Nottle

A unprepossessing brown cover and off-white pages set the tone for a book that is unlike any other history-of-gardening book. The author takes a line previously untried I think by garden historians, he sets out to deconstruct some of the most powerful 'facts' of Anglo-European gardening. Plant hunting by 'great' European explorers is shown as plant stealing from the native peoples of the world; designers who 'made' famous gardens are shown as exploiters of rural labourers and the working classes, the largely ignored role played by women in the history of garden making is explored as are the influences of broader government policies and politics in the cultural meaning our gardening takes.

Covering an enormous range of material from Medieval, Arabic and Aztec gardening to the fine niceties

of Victorian gardens the author liberally salts his text with many snippets of surprising information that give the book a novel and compelling outlook.

Recommended reading, especially if the endless rehash of accepted garden history has passed beyond mythology and become a jaded artefact in your cultural baggage.

***Gardening from the heart: Why Gardeners Garden***

by Carol Olwell; published by Antelope Island Press 2406 McKinley Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94703. Approx \$36.00

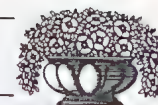
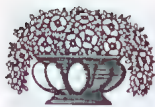
reviewed by Tim North

Gardening is hard work. So why do we garden? In this book 21 people, all of whom garden in the Western half of the United States, tell us why they garden. It's the kind of formula that can either be a crashing bore or intensely interesting, one that it isn't easy to keep in balance throughout a full length book.

Carol Olwell has succeeded in keeping the balance and holding our interest because she has not fallen into the trap of making this a book about gardens. It is about people, quite ordinary people who for one reason or another have found in gardening a creative outlet, a living, a therapy, or just a hobby. Some came to gardening late in life, like Bob Shepherd who made a desert garden in Utah when in his 70's. Then there is Linda Berifacque who, with her blind father, runs a "pick-your-own" market garden in Kent, Washington; Debbie Carlsen who grows fruit and vegetables in the unlikely climate of Alaska; Mike Sacco who tends a stretch of freeway planting in Spokane; and Catherine Sneed Marcum who has created a horticultural program for prisoners in a San Francisco jail.

This is not, mercifully another variation on the "American Mens' (Women's) Garden", it is a totally original concept and it works because its people come from all





walks of life, garden for many different reasons and are articulate about why they do what they do.

Ms Orwell however has a particular point to make but she does not make it through her 21 gardeners, instead she leaves it to the end. She is passionate about the dangers of chemical pesticides, so she includes a fairly long excerpt from 'Pesticide Alert' by Lawrence Mote and Karen Snyder, possibly the most succinct exposition on the whole subject ever published, and a list of pesticides commonly found in foods, listing potential health hazards. Because it is not particularly relevant to the theme of the book one wonders why this material was included, which is not to say that it is unimportant; clearly it should be understood by all gardeners.

***The Orchid Man: The Life, Work and Memoires of The Rev. H.M.R. Rupp, 1872-1956***

**by Lionel Gilbert: published by Kangaroo Press, 1992  
recommended retail price \$49.95  
reviewed by Tim North**

Many books have been written by and about that quiet scholarly yet often entertaining brethren, the clergymen-naturalists. H.M.R. Rupp (he preferred the formality of all three initials and was 'Montague' only to a chosen few) was a notable, but until now unsung member of this brethren. Which considering the many thousands of letters he wrote to botanical colleagues, the many scientific papers he had published and his two important reference works, "Guide to the Orchids of New South Wales" (1930) and "The Orchids of New South Wales" (1949), is curious. We should be grateful to Dr. Lionel Gilbert for writing an extraordinary good biography of a most interesting person.

The son of a clergyman who arrived in Australia in 1849, an orphan from his native Germany,

H.M.R. Rupp attended Geelong Grammar School, whose headmaster at the time was an uncle by marriage and a noted amateur botanist, John Bracebridge Wilson. From there he went with some scholastic honours to Trinity College, Melbourne; was ordained into the priesthood in 1899 and from then spent over 40 years as parish priest in a dozen or so different areas, many of them around Newcastle in New South Wales. His interest in botany — especially orchids — almost equalled his dedication to the Church. As a botanist he practised the traditional methodology — explore, discover, examine, dissect, compare, determine. The number of new species he discovered and named is impressive. When he was posted to the coalmining district of Weston, near Newcastle, his friend and fellow naturalist Alec Chisholm declared that he wouldn't find many orchids there. Rupp replied that if he didn't find more in one year than he had discovered in the previous five, he would eat his ecclesiastical hat. Nine months later he was able to say he had found 65, his honour and his hat were saved.

Rupp left several unpublished manuscripts, which amounted to an autobiography. Sensibly Dr. Gilbert has chosen to edit these and use them as the second part of his book. The first part therefore serves largely as an introduction and there is some repetition.

The success of any biography depends virtually on the character of the person whose life is told. Rupp comes through as an engaging, compassionate, often humorous man with simple interests plants and his fellow humans.

He spent some years of his retirement working as a consultant in the Herbarium at Sydney's Royal Botanic Gardens, where he was known as 'The Orchid Man'. It is fitting therefore, that as I write this Dr. Gilbert's 'The Orchid Man' should be having its official launch in The Royal Botanic Gardens.

***Australia Native Indoor Gardening Made Easy***

**by David and Patricia Ratcliffe;  
published by Little Hills Press;  
recommended retail price \$26.95  
reviewed by Tim North**

Many people would probably be hard pressed to name more than a dozen native plants suitable for growing indoors. This book, first published in 1987 and now re-issued with additions in paperback, describes more than 400. Furthermore it includes a very comprehensive pictorial chart giving characteristics, cultural requirements and suggested uses.

The authors have operated a nursery specialising in native plants for over 25 years and have included many plants that are not yet in general cultivation, expressing the hope that other nursery people will become aware of their potential.

**Reviews in Brief**

***Colour Guide to the Wildflowers of Central and Western Australia***

**by Denise Greig: published by Collins Angus and Robertson: \$24.95**

**A companion guide to "Colour Guide to Wildflowers of Eastern Australia": handy sized paperback guides to the country's flora.**

***The Garden Doctor***

**by John Gross: published by Kangaroo Press: \$12.95**

**Lists 200 different plants, the pests and diseases each is susceptible to and what to do about them.**

***Growing Irises***

**by Graeme Grosvenor:  
published by Kangaroo Press: \$14.95**

**Second edition of this short but authoritative guide to the selection and cultivation of this popular group of plants.**



# DRY STONE WALLS — 2

by Nathan PERKINS

## CONSTRUCTING A NEW RETAINING WALL

**M**uch of that which was covered in the last article "Constructing a New Free Standing Wall" applies to this article too. Sources of stone, tools and safety are exactly the same. The principles for building the wall are likewise the same. Nevertheless there are some new points to be introduced and emphasis on key aspects will be made step by step as we build the retaining wall.

Many gardens and yards benefit from retaining walls. As their names suggest, they differ from free standing walls in that one side holds back soil or loose rock. Retaining walls are built to retain and stabilise terraces, road or path cuttings, embankments, garden beds, river banks and other steep slopes to which soil slump or rock slide are likely to cause problems. It is a mistake to think that a retaining wall can be built in any way you choose just because one side of it appears to rest against something solid. The same basic principles are used in its construction as in free standing walls.

### Dimensions

Retaining walls can be built to more or less any height. The main things to consider are, what sort of loads the wall is likely to have to retain, the amount of water run-off and catchment that will be imposed on the wall, whether the wall will be facing unstable clay or loose screen etc. and whether it will be subject to traffic vibration or regular disturbance. The wall should, in most cases, have a batter (slope) from the foundation back to the top of the wall (one should aim to work with gravity not against it).

There is no hard and fast rule with retaining wall dimensions. It

depends entirely on the given circumstances. I generally try to make the foundation width double that of the expected finished top width. For example, a wall one metre high would have a foundation width of 60 cm and a finished top width of 30 cm. Once the wall reaches a height of one metre or more I suggest scaling the width down in order to preserve stone within reason.

### BUILDING THE WALL

#### The Foundations

The retaining wall must sit solidly on its own footings. The foundation trench for the footings should be dug down to firm subsoil or bedrock, 20cms would be adequate for a wall about one metre high.

Set out the stringline for the line of the wall. Try to build both ends of

the wall first. Choose large stones for the ends — they should have a flat bed (bottom) and two good faces if possible. If the wall merges with a bank at either end, be sure to key (tie) the ends into the bank at their sides as well as at the back (refer to Figure 1).

As with free standing walls, in choosing the foundation stones try to select your largest stones first. They serve to spread the weight of the wall over a greater surface area and therefore decrease the effects of subsidence. They are of course more easily rolled into the footing than lifted up into the wall!

#### (b) The Cavity

Once you have laid a line of foundation stones, pack in and around them with the ugly, more awkwardly shaped stones. If you have plenty of big stones use these as large fillings (hearting), rather than

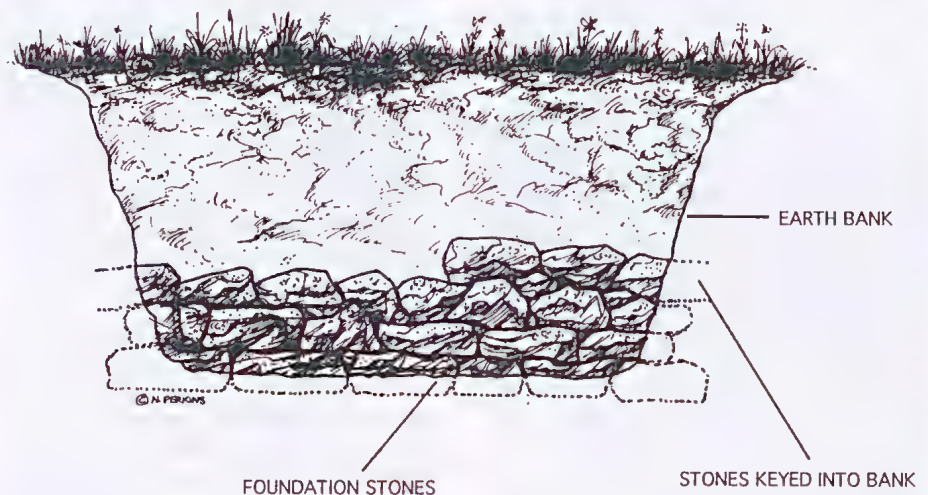


Figure 1 — a retaining wall with merging ends into an earth bank.





breaking them into smaller hearting. A certain amount of earth always slips down from the bank as you work. This is fine as long as you pack the earth down as you proceed and do not use it instead of stone hearting.

### (c) Building

- (i) Most importantly, always cover the joints formed by the stones below, otherwise lines of weakness, called "running joints", will develop.
- (ii) Place the stones so that they lie with the longer side running into the wall, not along the face (known as "trace walling") This makes a much stronger wall.
- (iii) Make sure that each stone is firmly in place before moving on to the next.
- (iv) Fill the wall as the work proceeds — do not leave it as a separate job.

### (d) The Throughstones

Throughstones, as their names suggest, are large stones that extend right through the wall and help to tie the wall face to the bank, making a stronger wall (refer to Figure 2). Not all walls have throughstones, as in some areas stones of sufficient length cannot be found. Their outer face should be flush with or sticking out no more than five or ten centimetres from the face of the wall while their backs should project well into the cavity between the wall and the bank. Do not break them off if they are a little too long. Rather, make holes in the bank to take them, remembering to allow for them to settle in the first years. One should not, therefore, bed them onto solid earth or rock in the bank. (Refer to Figure 2). ➡

*(above) Finished retaining walls.*

*(right) The process of wall construction; note "throughstones" at regular intervals and regular heights.*





### (e) Finishing the Top of the wall

Try to finish the wall with large stones that have their weight running into the wall. Tempting as it is to finish the top of the wall off with little stones, don't do it. In the short term aesthetically they help to give a tidy finish to the top. However, in the longer term, as they work themselves loose, or even worse, are displaced, the wall will take on a rather "shaggy" appearance.

Planting right up to the wall is often desirable, especially with a garden bed. However, careful thought must be given to the type of root networks that are likely to develop. Some may help to bind the wall, whilst others may work against it, disturbing the stonework. Another consideration is that when gardening behind a recently completed dry stone retaining wall, care should be taken not to disturb the stones with gardening forks etc. Do not stand on or close to the edge of the wall until it has had plenty of time to settle.

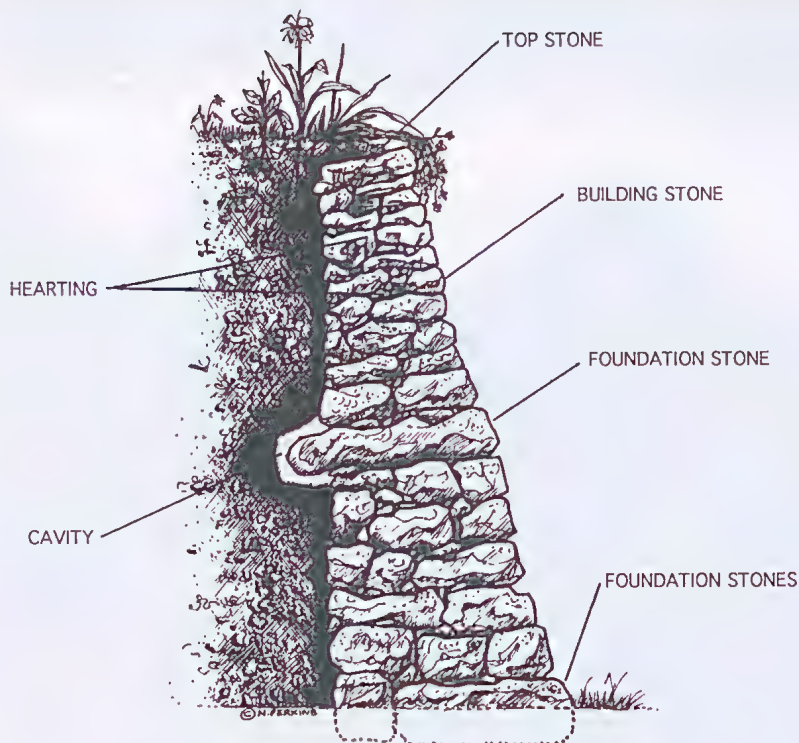




Figure 2 — cross-section of a finished retaining wall.



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# Birches

*Jock THOMPSON discusses the relative merits of some common and some less common members of the genus *Betula*.*

**B**irches are a genus of deciduous trees from the Northern Hemisphere. Although there are some 60 species, they vary little in their stature, always remaining a light branched, graceful tree. Growing naturally on the edge of Oak, Elm and Pine forests, the birch was very aptly named by Coleridge as "The Lady of the Woods". Hugh Johnson wrote the following description: "Apart from its bark, the beauty of a birch lies in its poise; the way it puts dense swarms of lacy twigs in the air with the flimsiest of engineering".

The greatest virtue of birches is they are one of the few trees that always look good. In winter their stem colour and the intricate formation of their branchlets can best be seen. This is followed in spring by the release of small, short stalked leaves which are pale green at first then darken to a deep green during summer. Then there is autumn, when birch leaves turn the purest most sovereign gold of any trees. It is during autumn that the female catkins expand and shatter, releasing millions of tiny winged seeds.

In the Northern Hemisphere the bark of birches was indispensable, North American Indians found they could peel the bark off in large strips and use it for canoes. The Lapps used the bark for waterproofing their huts and when all is sodden on the forest floor, birchwood will burn. School teachers also found their thin strong branches very useful to chastise wayward school boys.

The Common or Silver Birch is not only one of the most widely planted ornamental trees, but also has the added advantage of not having a terrifying botanic title *Betula pendula*.

There are many cultivars of the Common Birch that have a far superior white trunk when young. The

colour being maintained until old age. The Swedish or Cut-leaf Birch (*Betula pendula* 'Dalecarlica') is a particularly graceful slender tree with deeply cut leaves. *Betula pendula* 'Tristis' (meaning sad) is an elegant upright growing variety with a strong weeping habit.

I have been impressed by a new cultivar called 'Wades Golden' which has lovely golden branches and is a good strong growing variety. It is the best birch for autumn colour. Some other good forms include the narrow growing 'Fastigiata' and the weeping 'Youngii', which is best if grafted on a two metre high standard. There is also a purple leaved form. These cultivars need to be budded or grafted, so consequently cost slightly more than the Common Birch, but are well worth the extra few dollars.

When I first saw the glistening white trunk of a *Betula jacquemontii* I was convinced its owner regularly painted the stems with a high gloss white paint. Only after I have vigorously rubbed the trunk and peeled off large quantities of bark, I realised that in fact, pure white was its natural colour. Similarly with the species *Betula albosinensis* var. *Septontrionalis* (I don't know if this has a common name — we just call them "Albo's"), whose peeling bark reveals a polished pale coppery colour with pink tones. "Albo's" have a slightly different growing habit in that they tend to crown more than most birches. These two trees are not only regarded as the supreme birches, but trees with few peers for their stem colour equalling the peeling bark of *Acer griseum* and the lovely mahogany coloured trunk of the Tibetan Cherry (*Prunus serrula tibetica*). Generally speaking, birches are at their best if planted in a group, however *jacquemontii*'s and "Albo's" are so good you need only plant one (or two, or three) individually in the prime spots in the ➡



garden. Until recently, their rarity made them collector's items, but fortunately they are becoming more readily available.

Two good birches for group planting (I don't know if it is superstition or if it came from some garden designer, but they say you should always plant an odd number) are the Japanese Birch (*Betula japonica*) and *Betula szechuanica* (from the Szechuan Valley in China). These two varieties are good vigorous growers with slender white trunks that they get from an early age (three years) and maintain well into maturity. *Betula japonica* is a variety that grows true from seed, therefore it can generally be bought for similar cost to the Common Birch. Some innovative Victorian nursery men are grafting the weeping 'Youngii' Birch on *Japonica* stock to achieve the superior white stem.

With so many species varying from dwarf growing forms from the Tundra, which make marginally attractive rockery plants, through to large trees it is impossible to name them all, but some good varieties include the North American Canoe Birch (*Betula papyrifera*) or the River Birch (*Betula nigra*) which is good for damp (but not water logged) soils. It has attractive peeling shaggy bark.

One could hardly ask for a more adaptable, less demanding tree than the birch and once established is a tree that needs very little care — the operative words here being ONCE ESTABLISHED. Without doubt, the best looking birches are the ones that have been forced to grow quickly during the first three to five years. This doesn't only apply to the birch family, but most good ornamental trees. It has been said that we in Australia overwater our plants and that we should be planting trees to suit our environment. Personally, in our garden we happen to like good ornamental trees; we also like them to look good and to grow quickly. Rightly or wrongly, we give our young trees copious quantities of organic matter and regularly irrigate them.

I can't let this article finish without mentioning a close relative of the birches. I am, of course, referring to the Alders. They are possibly the most underrated tree in New South Wales. Apart from their value in the garden (particularly in winter with their woody cones and long decorative birch-like catkins), they deserve to be more widely planted especially along waterways and around dams in conjunction with the more commonly planted willows and poplars. There is a very fast-growing evergreen alder (*Alnus jorullensis*) which makes an excellent rapid growing wind break, particularly in a damp water logged site.

**Note:** Jock Thompson is proprietor of Pine Hills Selected Trees and Shrubs, at Bathurst, New South Wales.



(top) *Betula japonica*

(bottom) *Betula pendula* 'Tristis'

photos Sharon Boekel





*Betula albosinensis var septentrionalis*



*Betula jacquemontii*

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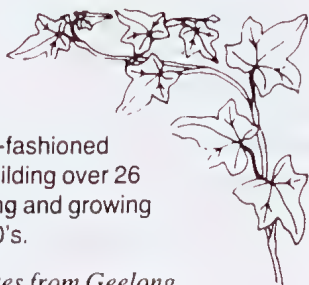
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# LETTERS



Dear Mr. North,

In the Garden Journal (Vol 11 No 3: March-April 1992), Patricia Copes draws attention to the township of Khancoban in the western foothills of the Snowy Mountains. As a resident of Khancoban and also presently responsible for municipal services in the township, I fully concur that the town is indeed charming. Although the natural environment is outstanding the efforts of the Snowy Mountains Authority, various organisations such as the Garden and Country Clubs and many residents, enhance the beauty.

I was however concerned that Patricia believes that "this pretty little town will be so vandalised" and "doomed". It is planned that since the Snowy Mountains Authority now owns less than a quarter of the houses in Khancoban, it is appropriate that responsibility be transferred to the locally elected Tumbarumba Shire Council. It is planned that this transfer occur in mid 1993 once the Snowy Mountains Authority have completed various improvements. The transfer arrangements will also involve financial support to the Shire to enable facilities to be maintained for at least 10 years.

There is no intention that the "rose garden be bulldozed", particularly since the Snowy Mountains Authority has recently purchased weed matting for several thousand dollars. It is correct that the fruit trees in the streets be removed. However these trees are approximately 30 years old and beyond their productive life. Rather than fruit trees being "ripped out", the fruit trees are to be replaced with more suitable street trees. The remaining fruit trees will be removed once the new trees are established.

The residents of Khancoban are proud of their township and the fact that it has won 4 Tidy Towns Awards over the last five years, including being the State Winner of Category B in 1991. It is necessary that the limited rate income be wisely spent and this, complemented by the pride and efforts of the residents, will continue to ensure that Khancoban remains a charming town with a future.

Yours sincerely  
Ken Lister  
Snowy Mountains  
Hydro-Electric Authority

Dear Tim,

In her article on domestic reforestation (Garden Journal Vol. 11 No. 4, pp. 186-188), Nancy Beckham once again reminds us of the benefits of planting trees, concluding that "trees are probably the only things of sufficient size to offset the excesses of civilisation such as the ever increasing amounts of carbon dioxide emitted into the atmosphere." This aspect of tree growth is currently receiving an increasing amount of attention from plant physiologists. Research has shown that the effects of increasing carbon dioxide concentration are not confined to global warming, which is still largely hypothetical. Another serious prospect is a declining protein content of leaves, fruits and seeds. This comes about because the extra carbon dioxide available to the leaves goes into sugars and

their derivatives rather than amino acids, the building blocks of polypeptides or proteins.

As a consequence, the leaves of plants growing under higher carbon dioxide regimes will be less nutritious for leaf-eating insects, or domestic animals like cattle. A lower abundance of animal-derived protein rich foods coupled with a lowered protein content for crops such as bean seeds or wheat grain will be the logical consequence of failing to halt the increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide content over the next 50 years.

Planting trees for shade in urban and suburban environments will help to decrease the rate of release of carbon dioxide by decreasing the demand for air conditioning, thus lowering the demand for electricity that depends on combustions of fossil fuels. Moreover, keeping (and replanting) trees on farms or in forests will help to maintain our rainfall pattern. So far as future life on this planet is concerned, every tree is worth its weight in gold.

Yours sincerely,  
David Murray  
Gwynneville, NSW

Dear Tim,

The Kyneton Daffodil and Arts Festival has been taking place for many years and each year gets bigger and better. Whilst there is always a shortage of money the annual display of daffodils always brings out many visitors from around Australia.

The rich fertile soil and cool climate in the Victoria Central Highlands makes Kyneton and district the perfect place to grow many types of bulbs. Over the years daffodil breeders have come here and spent many years breeding and developing new and better flowers. Three of Victoria's notable breeders of daffodils from this area are Alister Clarke, Hugh Dettmann, and Eve Murray, who still resides here. This year the Daffodil and Arts Festival Committee with co-operation from the Kyneton Shire Council will establish a special garden to honour these three growers.

The special garden will be located in the Kyneton Botanic Gardens and will feature only those daffodils bred and developed by these three growers. Many of the bulbs will be donated by Mrs Murray who is still opening her garden to visitors despite advancing years. I would invite your readers to visit Kyneton during our festival to be held Sept 3rd - 13th 1992, to enjoy a "host of Golden Daffodils" and many other attractions located here. Being only a one hour drive from Melbourne a very worthwhile day can be had enjoying our history, our gardens, our wineries and a whole lot more.

If any of your readers require more information I can be contacted on 054-223 060, or Mrs. Betty McClure on 054-221 183.

Yours faithfully,  
Noel Harvey  
President, Daffodil and Arts Festival Committee  
Kyneton, Vic.





# Ashcombe Maze

**A**shcombe Maze was planted by John and Sally Daly in July 1985 and opened to the public in April 1988.

It is believed to be the only hedge maze open to the public in Australia and compares well with the finest hedge mazes in the world, both in size and quality.

The paths between the hedges cover a distance of approximately 1 km and it is impossible to see over or through the dense hedges. The maze was designed to offer a challenge to people of all ages. At the centre of the maze a large garden has been planted to offer relief to the maze traveller. An emergency gate is provided at this point offering relief to those unable to go on.

In addition to the hedge maze there is also a rose maze planted with over 1200 roses. More than 220 varieties are represented, old fashioned and modern roses mixing happily in this maze of color and perfume. Maze travellers often report that this is the most difficult maze of all and that any prospect of escape through crawling under or through is daunting.

The extensive gardens at Ashcombe include a wide variety of plants. There is a summer garden, native gardens and a rock garden. The summer garden could best be described as a cottage garden which reaches its peak in summer. The native gardens begin to flower in winter and continue through into spring providing a haven for bird life. All discrimination breaks down in the rock garden where natives and exotics mingle happily together at all levels. A small stream flows through it, deriving its energy from two windmills. The first windmill is sited at the top of a hill and recycles water through a series of ponds over a distance of 100 metres. The second windmill is in a valley; it brings water to the top pond where it flows through the

system. The second mill ensures that every pond is continually full and over-flowing. The mill ensures compensation for evaporative loss and small leakages. Carting the rocks onto the site and positioning them was sometimes difficult as some of the stones were in excess of 20 tonnes. A large number of trees have been planted around the rock garden to create a feeling of tranquility.

Future extensions to Ashcombe Maze includes the development of small woodlands and ponds. A spring fed lake is planted on one side with trees native to North America and Europe while the opposite side is planted with a variety of Australian Eucalypts. At this stage the young trees are growing well. The natives have had to compete against larger Eucalypts already established but they have finally developed a strong growth pattern despite the ravages of caterpillars, beetles and rabbits. Basically it has been a war of attrition with continual reinforcements sent in to replace the dead and dying. The mild wet summer of 1991/92 has finally seen the battle won at great cost. We have probably planted close to 7,000 tubes and I feel there must be a better way. We will try direct seeding next time.

Tea Rooms, built with mud bricks made by members of the family, overlook the maze and gardens and offer a selection of delicious light lunches and refreshments.

*Ashcombe Maze; Red Hill Road, Shoreham, Vic. 3916  
Tel. (059) 89 8387; Melway ref 256E4*

*Open weekends, public and Victorian government school holidays from 10am-5pm and during the week for groups by appointment. (Closed for the month of August, Christmas Day and Good Friday).*







# Cultivating Cool Growing Native Orchids Under Shadecloth

by **Helene WILD**

**W**hen I look at our native orchid collection I find it hard to believe that it is only ten years since we first became aware that there were orchids native to Australia. Like most orchid enthusiasts we started out with a few cymbidiums, then delved into the delights of the Asian dendrobiums before the charm of our own Australian native orchids wormed their way into our consciousness. I guess, at the back of our minds, we really did know that native orchids existed and, if anyone had asked us, we could have told them that there was a Sydney Rock Orchid (which we now know as *Dendrobium speciosum*) and something known as *Dendrobium X delicatum*, but only because my father had been given a few of these plants which he grew successfully in various suitable spots around his garden and had, in turn, given us a piece of each. But we

were totally unaware that there are hundreds of orchid species native to Australia.

It was exactly ten years ago (in 1981) that my husband, Alex, was listening to the radio and heard of a native orchid show to be held at the Herbarium — and was determined to go. I went along for the ride and, when we saw the wide variety of native orchids on display, we were hooked. The numbers of species and hybrids, the colours, the perfume and, above all, the diversity of shape and form was incredible... and the massed display of those dainty little orchids was breathtakingly beautiful. Yes, you guessed it, we couldn't resist the temptation to purchase just a couple of plants to take home. We chose a small *Dendrobium kingianum* for its delightful pinky-mauve flowers and *Dendrobium cucumerinum* for its strange, cucumber-shaped



*Plectorrhiza tridentata* — Tangle Orchid



*Dendrobium falcorostrum* — Beech Orchid

photos H. Wild



leaves. The *Dendrobium kingianum* was ideal for a beginner and is now a huge, specimen plant absolutely covered with flowers during September and October, and the *Dendrobium cucumerinum*, although much slower growing and somewhat harder to maintain, flowers for every December around about Christmas Day.

The next year (1982) we were waiting on the doorstep for the show to open and, inevitably, we added a few more plants to our collection. Once again the massed display of plants held us enthralled and, there and then, we joined the Victorian Group of the Australasian Native Orchid Society, and, ever since, have regularly attended their monthly meetings, using the trading table to add more plants to our ever expanding collection and beginning one of the most rewarding phases of our lives.

It was not long before the shade of the lemon tree couldn't protect our ever expanding orchid collection and so we had to look for a larger area to house it. But wait! Our son had grown much bigger — the cat was the only sandpit digger! Our front courtyard was looking sad and neglected so, you guessed it, instant transformation was planned. We removed the sandpit and those few scraggly shrubs which had never really lived up to expectation; the grass was mown as low as we could get it; and the whole area was covered with black weed mat. We then rushed down to the local timber yard for treated pine and erected a frame in record time. The whole structure was covered with 50% black shade cloth which left us with a large shaded area with a small walnut tree in the centre.

Then came the exciting part — transferring our orchid collection to the new area. We reserved the east-facing fence for the mounted plants and placed the potted ones in neat rows on top of the weed mat — cymbidiums on one side; natives on the other; and the Asian soft cane dendrobiums facing north and receiving plenty of reflected warmth and protection from the brick wall of the house. We have since added weldmesh benches and a few shelves around the fence and our collection has grown and expanded from the few we started out with to (literally) thousands of individual plants; and the walnut tree, delighting in the additional watering and frequent applications of dilute fertiliser which runs through the pots of orchids, has grown into a large specimen and, as well as an annual crop of walnuts, provides additional shade over the hot summer months. The front courtyard is now completely given over to native epiphytic orchids and, I am sorry to say, the cymbidiums and soft cane dendrobiums have been banished to other, less prestigious areas.

But epiphytes (growing on trees) and lithophytes (growing on rocks) are not the only orchids native to Australia. We have a large number of terrestrial (ground) orchids which are mainly found in the southern states and many of these species can be grown under cultivation. Some of the easiest to grow are the colony forming greenhoods and these are the ones recommended for the beginner. We started out with the blunt greenhood (*Pterostylis curta*) and the nodding greenhood (*Pterostylis nutans*) and found both species very rewarding with regard to the number of flowers emerging during the winter months and large number of new plants they produce from

one season to next. Terrestrial orchids are produced from underground tuberoids which are available for purchase (at a most moderate cost) by members of the Australasian Native Orchid Society each December, or terrestrial plants may sometimes be obtained from the trading table on meeting nights.

Some of the more experienced native orchid growers within the Australasian Native Orchid Society have written a cultivation book with the beginner grower in mind. This book "Cultivation of Australian Native Orchids" is especially written for Melbourne conditions and is available from the Secretary, A.N.O.S (Victorian Group) Inc., P.O. Box 285, Cheltenham, Victoria 3192, for \$9.95 plus \$2.00 postage (or \$9.00 post free if you wish to enclose an additional \$8.00 to cover an annual subscription).

I shall not delve into cultivation here as Helen Richards wrote an article entitled "Australian Native Orchids — Tough Yet Beautiful Little Aussie Battlers Anyone Can Grow In The Home Garden" published in Gardening News, August/September, 1989 (pp 9-14) which will give you enough information to start with.

Incidentally, the Australasian Native Orchid Society's annual Spring Show is held at the Herbarium, Botanic Gardens, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra, over the first weekend of October each year from 11.00am to 6.00pm on the Saturday and 9.00am to 4.00pm on the Sunday with entry by donation. I strongly recommend that you take a look at this Show. Meetings are also held at the Herbarium — at 8.00pm on the first Friday of each month (except January) — you never know, you may suddenly find that you have discovered a whole new field of interest.

Native orchids may be purchased from a number of nurseries in the Melbourne area but, before purchasing a plant, make sure you can provide the conditions it requires — a plant needing a heated glasshouse should have its requirements noted on the accompanying label. Never plant your orchid in soil — use a potting mix made up of well weathered pinebark pieces (Debco produces a high grade orchid mix) and a pot with adequate drainage or, as some native orchids prefer to be mounted, tie it to a slab of pressed cork, fence paling, etc., or leave it on its original host. You will find that the majority of native orchids sold in Melbourne will grow satisfactorily without any heat at all and a shadehouse or a sheltered patio will be all you need to start with.

All Australian native orchids are protected plants in the wild and a permit is required before they may be removed from the bush.



### Some sources of native orchids.

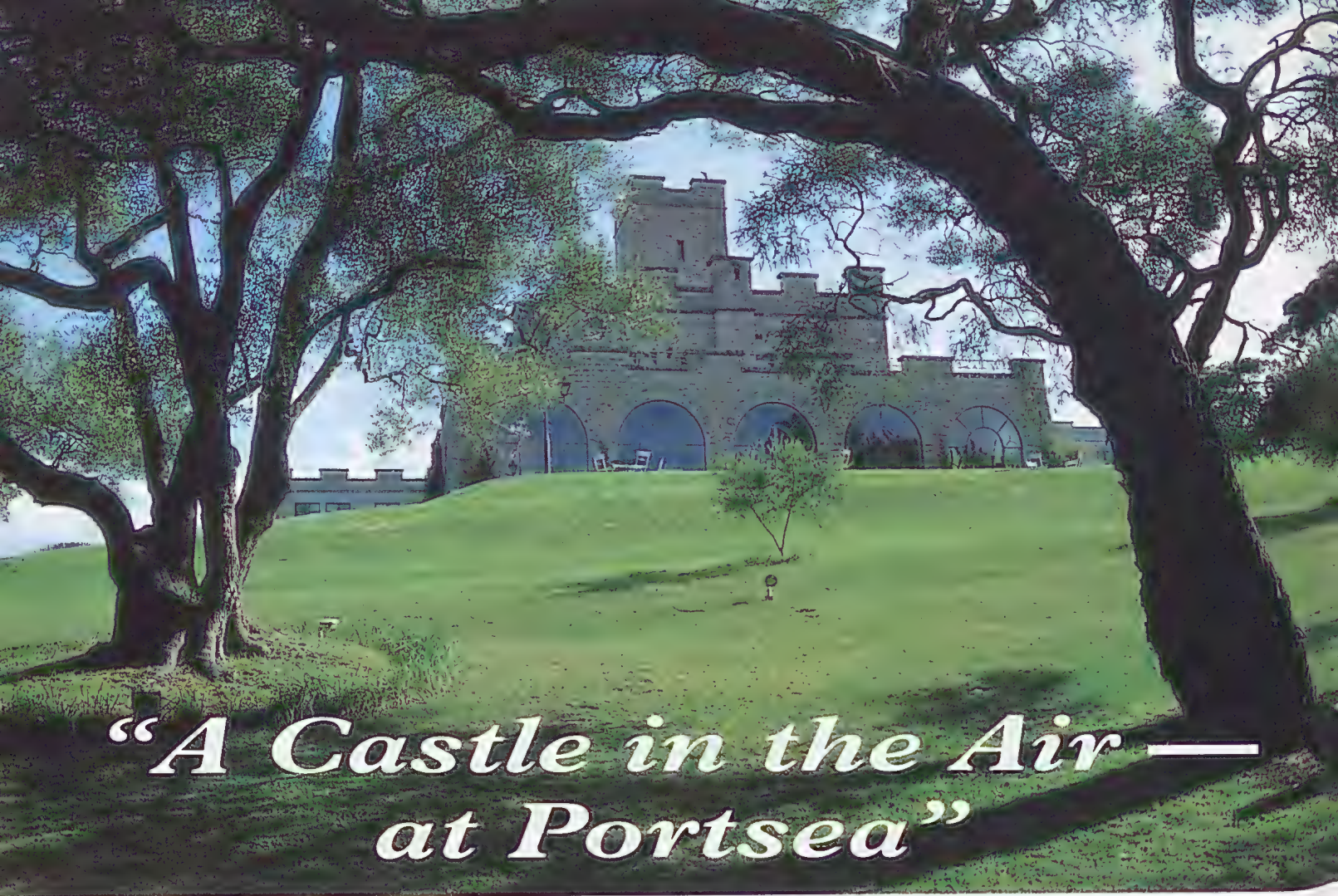
Dingley Fern Market, Old Dandenong Road,  
Dingley, Vic. 3172

Castleflora, RSD 181, Midland Highway, Castlemaine,  
Vic. 3150

Down Under Native Orchids, 58 Ridge Road, Kilaben  
Bay, NSW 2283

Merrellen Orchids, 181 McDonnell Road, Eagle  
Heights, Qld. 4271





## *“A Castle in the Air — at Portsea”*

*The first owner of Castle Delgany described Portsea as  
“the most favoured spot on the most beautiful peninsula in all Australia”.*

*Now his vision of “a castle in the air” has been enlarged and transformed  
into Delgany Country House Hotel, under the presiding genius  
of Hermann and Faye Schneider. **Tim NORTH** reports.*

### **Early history**

The original house on the site was a low spreading one, built in the 1880s for Judge a' Beckett. When the late Mr Harold Armytage bought it, in the late 1920s, it was in a state of dilapidation. Mr Armytage consulted the architect Desbrowe Annear who recommended its demolition and the construction of a new residence that would be more in keeping with the magnificence of the location, over-

looking both Port Phillip Bay and Bass Straits.

It was intended that the house be built of local limestone; the finest lime used in building the city of Melbourne had come from Portsea. But the process of extracting a sufficient quantity of stone proved too difficult and too slow, so the decision was made to bring limestone blocks from Mount Gambier, the extra cost being offset by the fact that this stone was easier to work than the local stone.

As the crest of the slope on which the house was to stand takes the full force of the southerly gales, strength had to be a primary consideration. The walls were exceptionally thick; seven

inches of limestone externally, four inches of reinforced concrete in the middle, and seven inches of cement bricks as the inside layer. Desbrowe Annear drew his inspiration from Roman arches and Tudor battlements, hence the name “Castle Delgany”. It was, in the words of *The Australian Home Beautiful*, “a place for dreams”.

Mr Armytage died only nine months after its completion, leaving the property to his two sisters, who lived at Como House in South Yarra.

During World War II Delgany was used as a military hospital. After the war it was acquired by the Dominican Sisters, who established a school for deaf children there, considerably ex-

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The title “A Castle in the Air — at Portsea” is taken from an article on Delgany in *Australian Home Beautiful*, March 1927.



tending the original house. These extensions, carried out in 1951 and 1968, were so skilfully integrated that to-day it is almost impossible to distinguish between the old and the new.

## Restoration

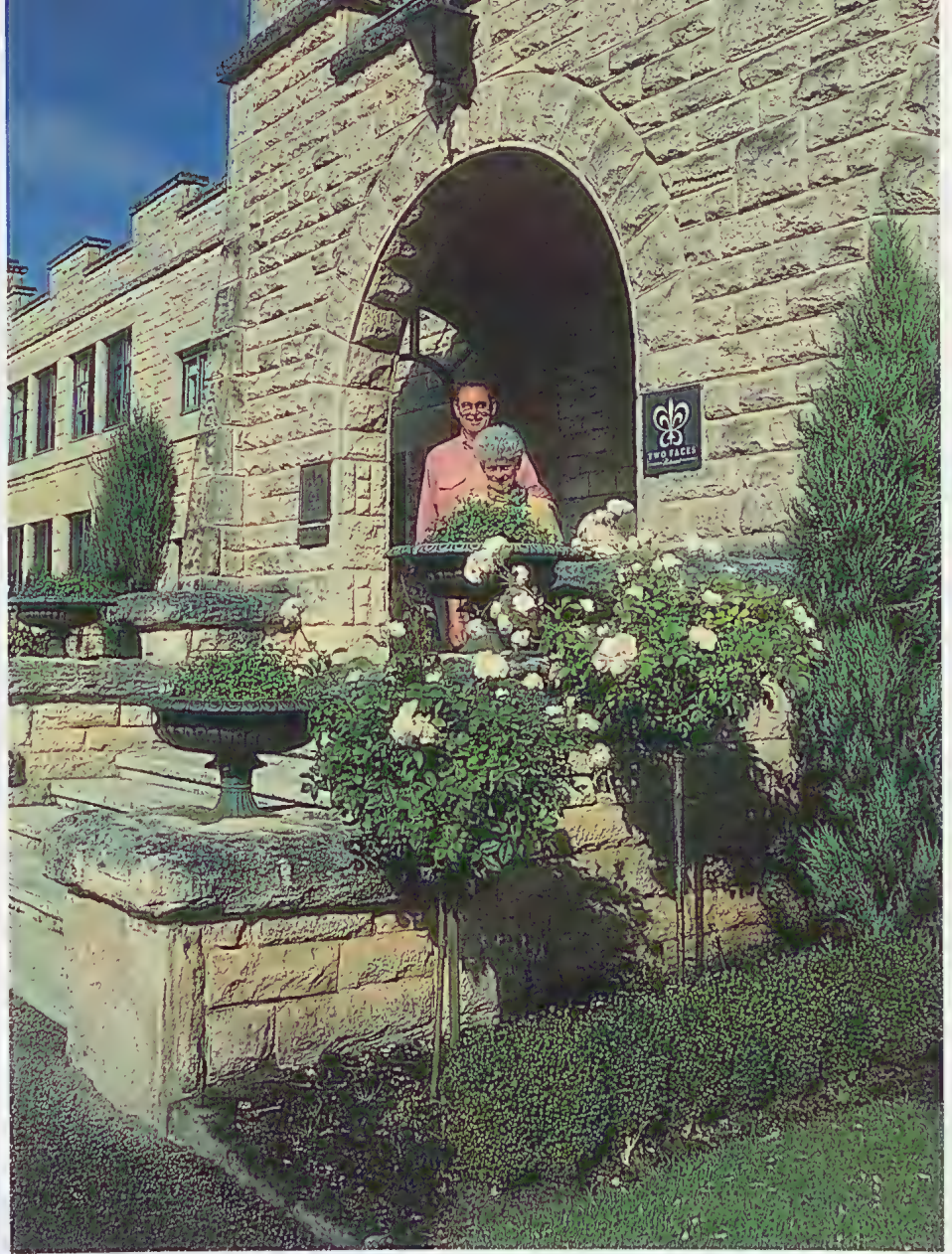
After being empty for some time, in 1987 Delgany was purchased by a consortium of Melbourne business people. A massive restoration and refurbishing program, costing over \$6 million, was then started to convert the property to a country house hotel of the highest international standard.

To-day Delgany, set in almost five hectares of picturesque grounds, has 32 suites, a heated outdoor swimming pool, two tennis courts and a croquet lawn; next door is the Portsea Golf Club. Its Two Faces Restaurant has been acclaimed one of the finest in Australia. The original garage building has been

converted to a conference centre capable of catering for up to 60 guests. The impeccable standards of comfort, service and food have earned it the right to belong to the prestigious Relais et Chateaux organization.

## The grounds

When the restoration began there was little remaining that could be called a garden. Furthermore, the site is by no means ideal for the ➡



(opposite page) Delgany House viewed through an "arch" of ancient Moonah.

(left) The swimming pool area.

(above) Hermann and Faye Schneider on the steps of Two Faces Restaurant.

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**Hermann Schneider arrived in Australia from his native Switzerland in 1956 as chef for the French team at the Melbourne Olympic Games. He stayed on and opened Two Faces Restaurant in Darling Street, South Yarra, in 1960. This became recognized as one of Australia's leading restaurants, an accolade now conferred on Hermann's new Two Faces at Delgany.**

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establishment of a garden. It is swept by salt-laden winds and the soil is poor and sandy.

Hermann Schneider, himself a keen gardener, decided to do most of the planning for a new garden layout himself. Wisely, he decided to retain the park-like appearance of the grounds, to restrict formal plantings to the immediate environs of the hotel building, and not to attempt anything that would compete in scale with the massive stone building that so dominated the landscape.

A major feature of the park, which stretches from the hotel in an easterly direction down to the main entrance on the Nepean Highway, is a grove of old, gnarled and multi-trunked Moonahs (*Melaleuca lanceolata*) that were probably there in Judge a' Beckett's time. At one corner of this grove are two European olives of about the same age, and still bearing fruit each year. On the far side of the grove is a row of radiata pines, now in need of surgery, and against the northern boundary a further row of huge, spreading Monterey Cypress.

Down each side of the main driveway are spreading Golden Lambert Cypress, interspersed here and there with red-flowering gums, an unusual and arresting combination.

Before the restoration began these were intertwined with Ti-tree and Black Wattle, which had to be grubbed out. Now blue and white agapanthus form an edging to the driveway.

As one approaches the hotel the planting becomes more formal. Lavender hedges surround a circular bed in the driveway and flank the drive itself. Clipped box hedges lead to the front door of the hotel. In order to ensure that these grew at an even rate a trench 60 cm deep was dug and filled with imported topsoil. Along the front of the hotel are standard roses interspersed with 'Skyrocket' junipers, edged also with box.

Opposite the entrance is a flight of steps leading down to an arched laburnum walk underplanted with bush roses; the laburnums, however, are having a hard time from the wind and may have to be replaced. At the top of the steps, standing as sentinels on either side, are two two-metre high Camperdown elms. Past the laburnum walk is a covered walkway on one side of which are growing Kiwi fruit, not yet at fruiting stage, while opposite are a number of young fruit trees including a quince, a special favourite of Hermann Schneider.

Beyond this again and on the lowest level of the site, is the visitors' car park, planted largely with Australian natives. To the left are the tennis courts.

Retracing one's steps and going round the restaurant end of the hotel with its wide arched windows, mounds of *Erigeron mucronatus* flank stone steps leading up to the swimming pool. The bed along the side of the restaurant is planted with 'James Stirling' pittosporum, while the bed on the upper level features hibiscus.

The sandy soil needs constant feeding. Fortunately the hotel kitchens provide plenty of compostable material, to which is added lawn clippings, leaves, etc. Three compost bins are in use at any one time. Mushroom compost and Dynamic Lifter are also used.

The five hectares of grounds are maintained by a part-time gardener, an apprentice and a labourer, again part-time. They now make a perfect complement to the main hotel building, the groves of trees providing total privacy from the main road while the formal gardens around the hotel are in keeping with the elegant yet relaxed nature of the Delgany lifestyle.







# DELGANY

- Country House Hotel -

NEPEAN HIGHWAY  
PORTSEA 3944  
VICTORIA AUSTRALIA

PHONE (059) 84 4000  
FAX (059) 84 4022

(opposite page) The gnarled multi-trunked Moonahs.

(above) The lawn outside Two Faces Restaurant.

photos Keva North

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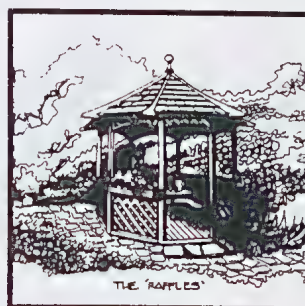
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# Beside the Seaside Beside the Sea

*Tim NORTH talks with  
Primmy BRIGHT in her garden,  
Shipway Lodge, at Sorrento, on  
Victoria's Mornington Peninsula.*

**Primmy, I believe the wall at the top end of the garden was part of the old village store. So was there an older garden on the site?**

Let me begin with a little history. My husband's grandfather, Alfred Bright, bought Sullivan's Bakery and the Sorrento General Store from Ted Sullivan in 1909 and set about building an Edwardian gentleman's seaside residence. The General Store was incorporated as one wing of the main house and the Bakery was extended to become maids' quarters.

Alfred's wife, Ruby, did not work in the garden. A cottage was built in the grounds for the gardener and his wife, Mr and Mrs O'Driscoll, and it was Alfred himself who supervised the planting of the conifers we see here to-day — *Cupressus lusitanicus*, *C. sempervirens* 'Stricta', *C. macrocarpa* 'Lombardiana' and 'Brunniana Aurea', and *Pinus insignis*. Some of these were planted as hedges but we had to remove 22 of them in 1984 as they had grown to 80 feet. The kitchen garden that we see to-day was begun during World War I; the beds were edged with red gum and the paths were dirt. It was a practical garden only, tucked away behind the

house. It grew vegetables, sweet peas, dahlias, carnations and gladioli for the household. Water for house and garden came from a deep well lined with red gum and pumped by windmill near the present fish pond.

Alfred's son, David, was interested principally in the vegetable garden but

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*"Some of these (conifers)  
were planted as hedges  
but we had to remove 22  
of them in 1984 as they  
had soared to 80 feet"*

---

his wife, Valda, worked unceasingly in the main garden until her death in 1974. To her we owe some quite beautiful fruit and nut trees which make a breathtaking sight in late winter and early spring. She was a romantic gardener and her style and impact is still apparent. I am grateful

to her for the old roses she planted, the cottonwood and the cape chestnut in the back paddock, the green beech outside the morning room, the golden elm by the cottage and the magnificent Chinese gooseberry, *Actinidia chinensis*, as well as the Chinese Beauty Bush, *Kolkwitzia amabilis*, which softens the limestone walls of the maids' quarters.

**When did your husband and yourself take over the property?**

We took it over in earnest in 1984 after our second London posting.

**Sorrento is buffeted by wind from both sides, from Port Phillip Bay on one and from Bass Strait on the other. So wind, especially salt-laden wind, must be a problem.**

The problems we were faced with must have been the same as those which Alfred and then David and Valda had to cope with. Salt-laden winds cause some scorching of many of the broad-leaved trees in late summer. Also the garden has three distinct limestone reefs, making lawns shallow in spots and new tree planting hazardous. Our rather alkaline soil, however, does have some rich peaty



spots under the old conifers so we do manage a few acid-loving plants too.

**Do you suffer from that other bane of seaside gardens, poor sandy soil?**

Yes, we feed the sandy soil every winter with quantities of chicken manure and pea straw put through the muncher. Nutrients are lost quickly as our abundant coastal rainfall leaches them away.

**What help do you have in the garden — for you have another garden in Melbourne?**

We are committed to living in Melbourne during the week so help is essential. There are no maids left in the maids' quarters but we do have a very hardworking caretaker couple in the gardener's cottage. Together we propagate, maintain and plan. In 1986 we renovated the main house with architect Peter Latreille and made many

gardener's cottage, thereby eliminating some lumpy terrain. We also created a 50 metre mixed border on a bit of sloping ground which already looks as though it has been there for years. This has been a great joy to me.

**That mass of *Crambe cordifolia* is a rather special feature. How long did the plants take to reach that size?**

The seed came from the bottom of Sarah Guest's fridge. The plants are now six years old and flowered after four years. They are very handsome

---

*"Living by the sea has  
huge benefits in spite of salt  
winds and hungry soil"*

---

and more lilies. But I mustn't complain; living by the sea has huge benefits in spite of salt winds and hungry soil. We never have frosts, have plenty of rain and superlative drainage, with no back-breaking clay.

**You lived in England for several years. This could be described as an English-style garden; was that what you set out to achieve?**

No, I don't think Charles and I actually set out to achieve anything specific, and neither of us had gardened in England. We did not have the experience or the depth of reading to create such a garden then. We knew so little when we inherited Shipway in 1979, but the bones of the garden were already there with the mature trees. I think the planting is more Mediterranean with drifts of dwarf blue agapanthus, wild freesias and *Scilla peruviana*. I also like to think there is an Australian feel to it;



*photo Clive Blazey*

architectural changes in the garden. We walled in the kitchen garden and moved the tennis court to a distant corner thereby improving the view from the house. Landscaper David Wilkinson told us where to put the horse paddock fence so as not to bisect the garden abruptly and designed the crescent shaped banks leading from the driveway to the

plants indeed provided one sprays with Dipel against the Cabbage White; they die down to nothing in winter except for an interesting bump in the soil.

**Are there many plants you would like to grow but can't?**

My *Hydrangea petiolaris* is struggling, and I would love to grow *Erythroniums*

after all, my English gardening friends can only shut their eyes and imagine our *Pandorea pandorana* 'Alba' and the huge weeping bottlebrush, *Callistemon viminalis* 'Hannah Ray'. And what about the little green-flowered *Melaleuca diosmifolia* in flower twelve months of the year on the tennis court fence? They are all beautiful.





# Ornamental Grasses

*Nancy BECKHAM describes a range of native and exotic grasses and grass-like plants.*

A number of ornamental grasses are ideal for accentuating specific areas in the garden, the most obvious example being around water features. Appropriately chosen grasses can also help in creating special atmospheres such as meadow or woodland gardens. A tall specimen grass creates an interesting backdrop for a garden statue; a low clump gives variety in a rock garden while larger clumps may be used in screening. If you live near a river, you can plan an ambience so that plantings of grasses, flaxes and sedges merge into the natural riverscape.

Although most grasses do not have large roots, they are often used for soil stabilising, some species being suitable around water while others do better in dry, sandy areas.

Some grasses have inconspicuous flowers and what you see is basically a cluster of seeds; others have feathery flowerheads which are useful in floral arrangements. In landscaping, ornamental grasses generally produce a graceful, airy look but they need tidying up at least once a year. Inflorescence is the botanical name for describing the part that flowers and seeds. In this article I am using the term 'flowerhead' as this is probably more illustrative for most people.

## DISADVANTAGES

The seeds of some grasses germinate readily or the plants may become invasive. Pampas Grass (*Cortaderia selloana*) has become a major problem to native vegetation in some areas. It is a pity that this large decorative plant could not have been introduced in a sterile form.

Bamboo is another grass with a bad reputation because of its vigorous growth habit. The common Gold or Black Bamboos (*Phyllostachys aurea* and *nigra*) could be contained within concrete or fiberglass slabs but these garden barriers would have to be

placed at least 60cm into the ground. These bamboos can be grown as screening plants in large containers, but will split the container if not divided periodically so I suggest plastic pots which can then be placed inside more decorative containers. There are both dwarf and clumping forms. A good clumping specimen is *Bambusa glaucescens*, which has a dwarf variety 'Riviereorum'. *Bambusa ventricosa* is a good species for containers although most bamboos will not do well as permanent indoor plants. Remember that the term 'dwarf' is relative, as some bamboos may grow 30m high in their natural habitat.

Another disadvantage of grasses is the potential fire hazard. If there is a risk, many ornamental grasses can be cut back with the mower at a high setting.

Another drawback is that nearly all ornamental grasses will ultimately look 'weedy' if you don't give them a trim and tidy at least once a year.

## AUSTRALIAN NATIVE GRASSES

My favourite native grass is Fountain Grass (*Pennisetum alopecuroides*) which forms a dense clump over 1m high and has largish, coppery pink, feathery flowerheads.

It grows best in dry, sunny conditions where it will spread rapidly but tolerates heavy, damp soils. Heavy spring pruning is recommended, at which time you can divide the plant.

(Feathertop (*Pennisetum villosum*) is similar to Fountain Grass but it is not native, coming from Abyssinia. The plumes may be cut, hung upside down to dry for floral arrangements. *Pennisetum clandestinum* from tropical Africa is Kikuyu, so some ornamental species of this genus may need to be watched in case they self sow or spread too vigorously.

## Kangaroo Grass

(*Themeda australis*)

This is useful for mass dryland utility planting or as a groundcover in a native garden. It grows best on light, gravelly soil in full sun or semi-shade. The purple-brown flowerhead is not especially decorative; the foliage tends to colour reddish during cooler, autumn weather.

Kangaroo Grass was once very common but has been markedly reduced by grazing and urbanization.

It grows about 50 cm high and can be given an annual mowing down to 10 cm.

Propagation by seed is somewhat difficult. Seeds need to be stored for six months to overcome dormancy and warm days are required for germination. Once it gets going, the plants are drought and frost hardy.

## Redleg Grass

(*Bothriochloa macra*)

A tough, low growing, drought and frost hardy tufted grass with purple/black flowerheads and reddish flower stems.

Redleg likes well-drained, low fertility soils so would be suitable for soil stabilising particularly where you were trying to establish a native garden.

## Grass Tree

(*Xanthorrhoea australis*)

I still prefer the name Blackboy for this species but Grass Tree is a more accurate description. It's very slow growing and eventually makes an excellent feature plant if properly sited in your garden.

If you propagate from seed, you will have a tufted plant within four years but will have to wait about ten years to get flower spikes.

Although in nature they are often found in heavy, clay or stoney soils, a well-drained site will give better results.





*Restio tetrachyllum* is an interesting, ornamental rush which can grow in excess of 1 m high. It grows from a rhizome and has decorative, feathery clumps on a long stem. It likes damp but well-drained soil and needs a sunny position.

Bulrush (*Typha domingensis*) is ideal if you have a large pond or a swampy area. It is a tall, vigorous plant with flower spikes to about 2 m. You may need to control its growth.

### Tussock-like plants

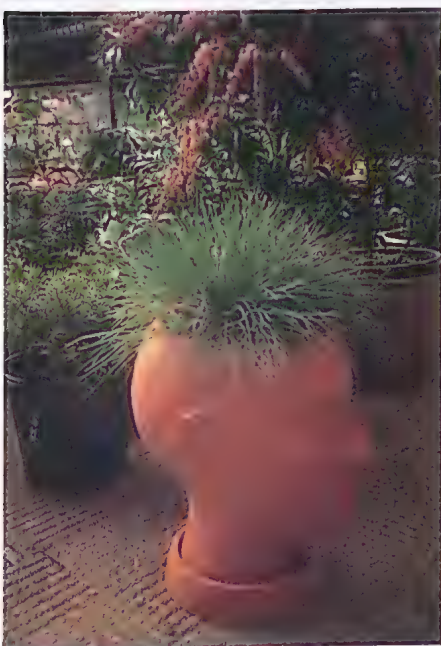
*Lomandra longifolia* grows about 70cm high and 1 m wide. The foliage

(above) *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Variegata'

(right) *Pennisetum setaceum*: the flower-heads should be cut before seeds develop

(below) *Festuca glauca*; an unusual use of an ornamental grass

photos N. Beckham



Strictly speaking, a grass is in a category of plants belonging to specific plant families but there are many native grass-like plants suitable for domestic gardens:-

### Rushes (Juncas)

*Isolepis nodosa* is the most attractive, with its slightly weeping form and its small, roundish flower-heads. It may grow 1 m high.

As it is a rush, it is perfect around ponds but it is hardy and versatile and may also be used to bind sandy, coastal soils.

Two lower growing species are *Isolepis hookeriana* and *inundata*, both of which multiply in wet conditions.

Most rushes are easily propagated by division.

arches over so it is useful for hiding edges. On warm days the flowers emit a perfume and the flower spikes are used in floral arrangements.

*Lomandra obliqua* has trailing, twisted stems and is useful for a well-drained, shady position where you want a small spillover plant.

### Sedges

(*Cyperus species*)

*Cyperus rutilans* has brownish spikelets about 60cm high; *lucidus* has flower stems over 1 m high with tufted heads and *sanguinolentus* is a smaller, tufted plant which will self sow in damp conditions.



## Cane Grass

(*Eragrostis australasica*)

This occurs naturally in inland areas and has plume-like flower-heads which can grow up to 3m high. It requires full sun and ample moisture and is suitable as a background plant.

## Eel Grass

(*Vallisneria spiralis*)

An interesting plant with ribbon-like, twisting leaves up to 2 m high and spiral shaped flower stems with small white flowers. It needs to be planted in water. There are many other Australian aquatic plants which could be used in ornamental ponds.

This is a small selection of native, grass-like plants. A more detailed listing is given in books such as **Australian Native Plants**, Wrigley J W and Fagg M, (Collins) 3rd ed, 1989.

## EXOTIC ORNAMENTAL GRASSES

### Zebra Grass

(*Miscanthus sinensis 'Zebrinus'*)

It is called Zebra Grass because the grass blades have transverse bands of yellow and green. If any green shoots are noticed, they should be cut back to ground level.

The clumps grow up to 2 m high and are ideal around pools or large rockeries. The flowers are useful in dried floral arrangements. In colder climates, the leaf foliage turns orange-brown during Autumn and the plants die back in winter. To keep the clumps attractive, you need to divide them every few years and cut out the dead parts during early Spring. There are a number of varieties of this and most species of grasses.

### Blue Fescue

(*Festuca 'Glaucia'*)

The experts are still debating its correct botanical name. It is one of the neatest ornamental grasses and the flowerheads add to its attractiveness. It usually stays in a clump about 30cm high and 30cm wide but you need to divide the

clumps every few years to prevent die off from the centre.

Light, sandy soils are preferred and full sun to keep the foliage blue. It may brown off somewhat in the winter so give it a trim and tidy each Spring.

### Barbed Wire Grass

(*Cymbopogon refractus*)

An unusual, clumpy grass with somewhat twisted leaves and a seedhead which turns reddish-brown when mature. It grows best in semi-shade on sandy, stoney soils and is suggested as a mass under-planting to achieve a woodland effect.

It is related to Lemon Grass (*Cymbopogon citrinus*) which is used in Asian cooking and as a herbal tea. Most cats are fond of chewing the young leaves. Lemon Grass grows fairly vigorously almost anywhere and requires a heavy prune to keep it neat and to encourage new growth which is more palatable to man and cat.

### Weeping Ricegrass

(*Microlaena stipoides*)

In moist, shady conditions with fertile soils, the leaves form a dense, green clump. In infertile dry conditions, it is coarser, paler and has longer stems.

With the mower at a high setting, it will produce a reasonable lawn or it may be used as a clumping ground cover. In country areas, it could be a standby stock food.

### Japanese Sedge Grass

(*Carex morrowii 'Aurea-Variegata'*)

The leaves are yellow with green margins. It grows best in warm climates, preferring a sunny position, well-drained soil and plenty of summer moisture. Its height is about 30 cm and an ideal position is around ponds, in borders or rockeries or as a cover to prevent weed growth.

In Spring the plants should be tidied and trimmed, at which time you could divide them.

### Ribbon Grass

You will be familiar with various forms of this grass. One of the best horticultural species is *Phalaris arundinacea 'Picta'*. Its green and white striped leaves provide a contrast

amongst plain green foliage plants. It will grow virtually anywhere and has the disadvantage of being invasive so you need to grow it within a controlled area. Alternatively, as a ground cover or soil stabiliser, you could mow it each Spring. (With nearly all perennial plants, when you constantly cut the above-ground portions, there is a tendency for the plants to have weaker root growth and less vigour generally.)

Another invasive plant in the same category is the *Chlorophytum* species — some people call this Ribbon Grass, but you may know it as Spider Plant. Surprisingly, NASA researchers report that it is one of the best plants for removing indoor pollutants such as formaldehyde (which is emitted into the air from indoor construction materials). I have just started growing a number of these in containers so that I can rotate them between the patio and indoors. These plants need good light as well as annual re-potting to keep them decorative.

Although not grasses botanically, there are numerous exotic, grass-like plants, such as Mondo Grass (*Ophiopogon japonicus*) which forms a low, dense, dark green cover, is a good alternative to a lawn under trees. It will tolerate some pedestrian traffic and an occasional mowing. The foliage is damaged by full sun.

*Liriope muscari 'Variegata'* forms a dense clump of green and yellow striped foliage about 30cm high and produces a flower spike with purplish flowers. It is best grown in semi-shade as a border or in a rock garden.

An increasing number of retail nurseries are now stocking ornamental grasses. As far as I know, there is not an Australian book specifically on these but you may be able to buy or borrow one of the following:

Reinhardt TA & M and Moskowitz M, **Ornamental Grass Gardening**, (HP Books USA) 1989

Feese M T, **Ornamental Grasses and Bamboos**, (Wisley Handbook No. 4, Royal Horticultural Society, London) 1983

Grounds R, **Ornamental Grasses**, (Pelham Books, London) 1979





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There is no better time to visit the Highlands than spring, when the gardens are bursting into life after their winter rest. The many deciduous trees are coming into leaf, the flowering peaches, plums and cherries are a mass of blossom, the ground is carpeted in bulbs — daffodils, bluebells, hyacinths and of course tulips, providing the perfect foil for the wonderful range of flowering shrubs — lilacs, forsythia, rhododendrons, camellias, dogwoods, wistaria, even some early roses.

Tulip Time, one of Australia's leading floral festivals, is held every spring, centred on Bowral's Corbett Gardens, which this year have been planted with 45,000 tulips and 14,000 other spring bulbs, along with massed beds of annuals and cool climate perennials.

Some of the Highlands' finest private gardens are open to the public at this time, each one with its own special character to delight the plant and garden lover.

The Highlands, however, has more to offer than gardens. The visitor can dine in one of the district's many fine restaurants, sample wine from our local vineyard at Joadja, visit historic buildings or quaint country villages, explore unspoilt National Parks with spectacular lookouts, waterfalls and curious features such as "Glow Worm Glen", or browse through antique shops, art and craft galleries.

Accommodation ranges from luxury hotels of international standard to comfortable guest houses and "farm-stay". Almost all outdoor sports and activities are catered for — horse riding, biking, golf, tennis and cricket — with a visit to Bowral's Bradman Museum a "must".

There is no better place to "rediscover" in spring than the Southern Highlands.

For further information on all there is to see and do contact the Southern Highlands Visitor Information Centre on (048) 71.2888.





# ... Rediscover the Southern



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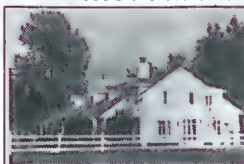


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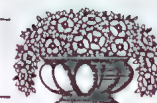
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## Tomatoes in ashes

According to the Bureau of Education in the Phillipines it is possible to extend the season in which tomatoes are available by preserving them in wood ash for up to three months. Only newly picked tomatoes which are ripe but not soft, should be preserved. They must be free of bruises and blemishes. The method recommended is to line a wooden or cardboard box with paper, cool ash is then sifted to remove sharp particles and spread evenly on the bottom 5cm thick. The tomatoes are then arranged upside down in one layer and another layer of sifted ash poured on top of them. This process is repeated until the box is full. It is then covered and sealed and kept in a cool, dry place. It is claimed that although the skin of the tomatoes will wrinkle the pulp inside will remain juicy.

## Foster Gardeners

The Arboretum of Flagstaff in Arizona has enlisted volunteers throughout its area to grow plants of potential garden value. These "foster gardeners" observe the plants performance in their gardens and keep records of temperature and rainfall. Both the Arboretum, the foster gardeners and the public benefit since the best plants are sold at an annual plant sale. Many plants from areas with climates similar to that of the Arboretum will be evaluated in the many microclimates of the foster gardens.

## IPM plus ICM equals BMP

IPM (Integrated Pest Management) which employs a range of cultural chemical and biological controls has helped greatly to reduce the use of toxic pesticides. Now the concept is being expanded into ICM (Integrated Crop Management) which includes other factors, such as attention to site, soil, plant selection, planting, fertilizing, irrigation and pruning practices. In some quarters it is being called BMP (Better Management Practices). The biggest

impetus to this concept is coming from gardeners' organizations according to a report from USA. The Co-operative Extension Service offices in Washington D.C. and in Alexandria and Arlington in Virginia, for example have expanded their Master Composter program into a Master Natural Resources Manager program. This includes education and action in composting, IPM, low-input gardening, water management, urban forestry and recycling. As one of the programme leaders says, "the aim is to train citizens to make informed choices as to how to change undesirable environmental practices," and thus achieve both better gardening and better living.

(Source: The Avant Gardener published by Horticultural Data Processors, New York.)

## Restoration project at Adelaide Botanic Gardens

Work has now commenced on Stage 2 (the Dilapidation Survey) of the restoration programme of the old Palm House in the Adelaide Botanic Gardens. This involves the tagging, indexing and assessment of every component of the building, and will be carried out by architects Bruce Harry and Associates in conjunction with SACON. On completion of Stage 2 it will be possible to determine the precise cost of the restoration programme, which is estimated to take two years. Stage 3 will involve the dismantling of the building and the restoration of all components. Stage 4 will be the re-assembling of the Palm House and the restoration of the associated landscape and visitor facilities.

## Epsom Salts for tomatoes.

A gardener in Ontario, Canada, reports increased tomato yields with the use of Epsom salts. Three rows of tomatoes were planted; one had dolomite dug into the soil, the second was watered with Epsom salts in solution, the third acted as a control. All three rows were covered with infra red transmitting plastic to speed soil warming. The two treated rows grew slightly faster than the control, and the

Epsom salts row produced the first ripe fruits. The dolomite row out-yielded the control row by 27% but the Epsom salts outyielded the control by 43%.

## Dried yeast

Researchers in Germany have found that dried yeast, applied to indoor plants at the rate of one-third to one-seventh ounce per pot every two to three months resulted in growth equal to that produced by conventional NPK fertilisers.

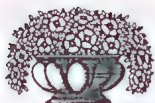
## The importance of calcium

A lack of calcium in the cell walls of apples causes bitter pit and other diseases; roses with insufficient calcium suffer new growth dieback. Recent experiments indicate that calcium can also increase the cold hardiness of plants. In USA apple and pear trees sprayed with calcium chloride were found to be six degrees Fahrenheit hardier than unsprayed trees. Calcium may also help chill-sensitive plants which suffer adverse reaction to cool but above freezing temperatures. Calcium is known to promote cell membrane stability, so the theory is that additional calcium prevents membrane deterioration in these plants.

## Dwarf hollies

Many who have visited gardens in the USA will have made a special note of one or more of the dwarf forms of the spineless Japanese Holly (*Ilex crenata*), looking remarkably like a Buxus and used extensively as a miniature hedge round formal borders. Now there is almost a flood of dwarf hollies in that country. At least nine dwarf cultivars of *I. crenata* are available, as well as a complex hybrid combining four different *Ilex* species called 'Rock Garden', which grows to only 15 cm with a spread of 30 cm. This has true spiny holly leaves and red berries. There are also dwarf forms of *I. verticillata* and a tiny deciduous *I. serrata* 'Koshobai'.





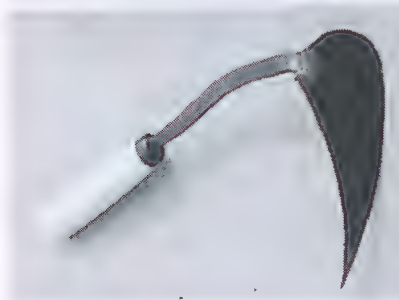
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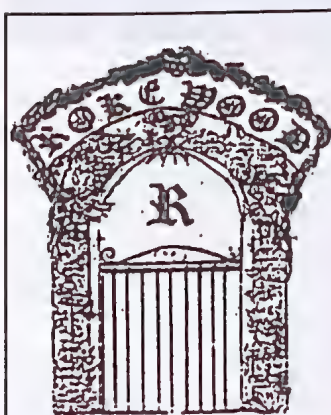
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### Felco secateurs

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# ARTISTS IN THE GARDEN

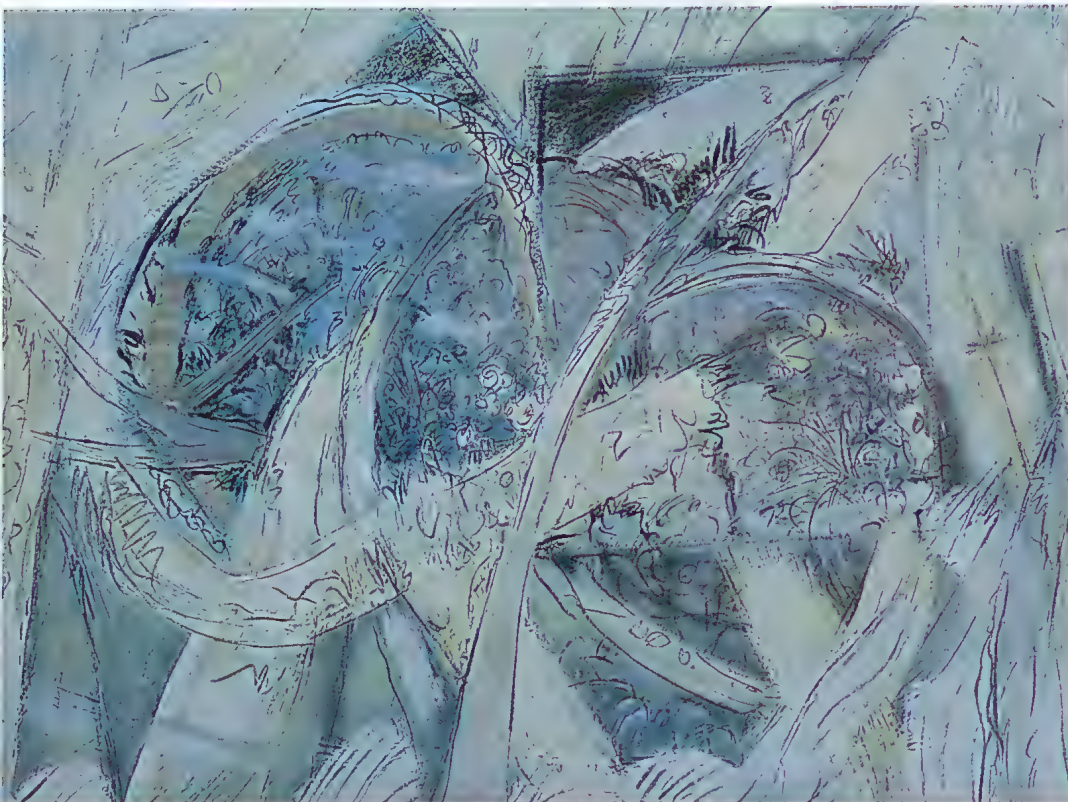
## 7 — Richard Murray

### Qualifications

Trained at National Art School  
and Alexander Mackie Teachers  
College 1964-68.

Taught Art in High Schools in  
ACT and NSW 1969-78.

Full time Ceramic Artist from  
1979.



### Exhibitions

Numerous, from 1975 to the  
present time.

Currently represented in a group  
show at the Goulburn Regional Art  
Gallery (to 15th August).

A large body of work is on per-  
manent display at Deloraine  
Galleries, near Braidwood, NSW.  
This is also our home, garden and  
studio.

### Personal Statement

My work has evolved over the  
past two decades in response to the

---

(above) platter (60 cm diameter) — “Tree  
Bridge over a Pond”.

(below) sewn canvas and paper collage  
(200 x 120 cm) — “Tree Tombstone with  
Three Ponds”. photos R. Murray



garden and landscape surrounding our country home. Sometimes people ask me if I identify particular types of flowers in my designs and the answer is No. Instead I see masses of lines and patches of coloured shapes which may resemble, but in no way imitate, a particular flower in the garden.

In essence, I am an abstract expressionist who reflects but does not imitate the surroundings.

I have yet to see a garden which can compete with the overwhelming beauty, subtlety and variety of those I find in nature, especially where a body of water, such as a dam, creek or pond, is involved. The added dimension of life through surface reflection, transparent depth and an abundance of growth in these water gardens has inspired much of the imagery in recent platters and paintings.

The canvases I paint are quite large and often include writings, which help to explain the spiritual way I feel about them. I think this helps the viewer as well.

If visiting Braidwood, please call in at Deloraine Galleries. It's the big house on the hill along Nerriga Road, opposite the show-ground (ask a local if you get lost).

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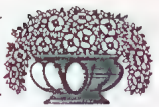
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### Wirruna Nursery, Wallington, Victoria

Unexpected hidden vistas and carefully planned colour schemes all contribute to the seductive atmosphere of the gardens at Wirruna Nursery, at Wallington on Victoria's Bellarine Peninsula.

Judy and John Bailey have established a reputation for their gardening expertise on what was, initially, a bare paddock. Today Wirruna is 30 years old and is well known to garden lovers far and wide.

The family background is steeped in a tradition of horticulture, with Judy's father pioneering vegetable growing in the Murray Valley, while John's parents grew grapes in the same region.

When John and Judy moved to Wallington to work at her grandpar-

ents' market garden, Judy began growing indoor plants as a supplement to the business, as well as establishing a plant hire business in Geelong.

To accommodate the plants a nursery was established next door to the family property. As the business expanded John gave up his job with the Department of Agriculture as a horticulture inspector, to work fulltime in the nursery.

Judy and John live on the 12 acre property, which is equally divided between the nursery and their show-place display garden.

When time allows the display garden will be further extended to include a bush garden, reflecting John and Judy's love of native plants.

The microclimate at Wirruna enables them to grow many tropical and sub-tropical species, such as a fruiting macadamia, avocado, banana and mountain paw paw, all grown organically.

Other plants of interest which Judy propagates for the nursery are *Ginkgo biloba* and *Wigandia caracasana*, a specimen of which can also be found in the Geelong Botanic Gardens.

*Wigandia* is an evergreen shrub from Central America, with large leaves and large terminal clusters of violet-blue flowers. It grows well in limestone, will stand coastal exposure and doesn't mind semi-shade, though it can be burnt by heavy frost.

In future Judy would also like to hold exhibitions of original garden sculpture by selected artists. One piece of work, a dragon fountain sculpture by Ellen Stanyer of Maldon is featured in the greenhouse, and continually attracts much attention and comment.

Strategically placed statues line the driveway entrance to the nursery, and numerous fountains are displayed around the property. Nearby is a fine specimen of *Michelia doltsopa*.

Wirruna has a knowledgeable staff of 10 who periodically also help in the display garden. The family tradition for a love of gardening looks set to continue, as the Bailey's family have also been trained in horticulture.

There are extensive car parks on site, and bus tours are welcomed. Wirruna does not have a mail order service.

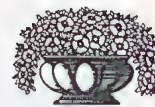
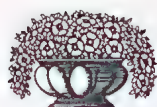
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John and Judy Bailey in the display garden. *Wigandia* is flowering in the right background.

(story and photos by Gail Thomas)





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# “Gateway to the Gardens”



*The Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney, which last year celebrated its 175th anniversary, is the oldest botanic garden in Australia and one of the oldest in the world, predating those of North America. It is also the oldest scientific institution in Australia, because from its foundation in 1816 botanists have collected and studied the plants of the continent.*



However, throughout its long history the Gardens has lacked space and facilities to explain to the public the vitally important issues of botany, horticulture, ecology and conservation of the natural environment and the work of the Gardens in these fields. In particular it has lacked exhibition halls, space for seminars and conferences and a visitor information centre. As the Gardens' Director, Professor Carrick Chambers, points out, there have been significant changes in public expectations of major botanic gardens in recent years, which have been stimulated by, and resulted in, further developments of their educational role. It is important that Sydney's Botanic Gardens does not fall behind comparable institutions in other parts of the world.

The design, prepared by architects Anchor, Mortlock and Woolley Pty Ltd, seeks to minimise the impact of the new building on its surroundings by placing most of the accommodation below the level of Mrs Macquarie's Road.

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Beginning with a general survey of the nineteenth-century colonial garden, he goes on to discuss individually the front garden, side gardens, the back yard and kitchen garden, the verandah with its potted plants, and gardens of whimsy, which include cactus and topiary gardens. In the second part of the book he writes about the charms

of the simpler, often much harder, old versions of many plants grown today and of others that he feels have been neglected for flashy modern hybrids.

Throughout the book the author shares with the reader his boundless enthusiasm for collecting, growing and enjoying old-fashioned flowers. Many of these flowers, and the gardens in which they are growing, are illustrated in the beautiful colour photographs. Specialist nurseries and societies where plants and seeds may be obtained are listed in an appendix.

192pp, 190 colour plates, rrp \$39.95

## Gardening with Camellias

This is an important new work on the genus *Camellia*. It presents an overview of the history of the genus around the world, and surveys in detail the important species, as well as the numerous cultivars raised in China, Japan, Europe, the United Kingdom, North America, Australia and New Zealand.

There is a lot of Australian material in this book, including discussion of local hybridising programmes, which, along with those in New Zealand, are currently leading the world. Foreword by Tom Savige OAM, International Registrar for the genus *Camellia*.

Jim Rolfe is an accredited camellia judge, and was for a number of years editor of the *New Zealand Camellia Bulletin*.

176pp, 170 colour plates, rrp \$39.95

## Hemerocallis - Daylilies

Every aspect of the cultivation and history of Daylilies is covered in this, the first book devoted to the subject for many decades. Here is information on botanical characteristics; there are descriptions of modern hybrids, and the factors involved in choosing suitable varieties; there is guidance on propagation and cultivation, and on the control of pests and diseases; and there are suggestions as to the various uses for *Hemerocallis*—for example in floral art, in landscaping, as edging plants, as companion plants and even as an ingredient in Asian cookery.

Clear and botanically accurate line drawings, and a selection of colour photographs, make this book a useful addition to the gardener's bookshelf, and invaluable for the Daylily grower.

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This book deals with the Banksias, Grevilleas, Hakeas and other plants of the family Proteaceae of the Sydney Region, ninety-four species in all. Each species is illustrated with photographs of the plant in its natural habitat, and close-ups of the flowers, complemented by actual-size paintings of the fruit and seeds. Descriptions of each of the species illustrated are included.

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# Harvesting the Bookshelf

by Jo-Ann BURKE

At times I've been asked where I find the more unusual books I write about. "The Book of the Bath", written and illustrated by Catherine Kanner (1st UK edition Piatkus Books, London, 1986, by arrangement with Ballantine Books, a division of Random House Inc of New York) I found at a discount sale in a local shopping centre.

At first sight of the rather comic illustrations I was about to replace the book when I noticed in the chapter entitled "Children's Baths" a recipe for Mild Lettuce Bath. Who could replace a book after an attention-grabber like that?

As I looked further I realised how little I knew about baths. Not the actual act of bathing, but the many and varied herbs and teas that can be used in them, their brewing and steeping; a balm bath to promote gentle sleep (high on my list of priorities), a jasmine bubble bath, soaps and shampoos, oils and colognes.

An extravagant bath the book reports is Mary Queen of Scots' Wine Bath. She insisted it preserved her beauty. One or two bottles of one's favourite wine — to bathe in, not drink!

Whatever form one's bath fantasies take I think the answer could be found here. Baths to be taken summer, autumn, winter and spring, baths at twilight and baths specially for the feet. Baths of rosemary, lavender, thyme, jasmine and many others.

Do you know that Romans and Greeks are reported to have been the first to bathe regularly in cold water? A history of baths through the ages is fascinating.

After reading "Book of the Bath" one would never again think of a bath as just a means of getting clean. Have you ever tried a berry bath? This is achieved by sponging crushed raspberries and cream over one's limbs while bathing!

Basic recipes for numerous baths are found in this book. No doubt fruits and herbs from one's own garden could be used. Maybe just a trifle bizarre, but there is much practical content. Seekers of the unusual will take delight in it.

In far North Queensland I was captivated by Cairns within minutes of leaving the plane when the

Gardener's Mate and I visited in 1981. Later visits have only strengthened my conviction that this part of the continent is my spiritual home.

Dunk Island, where butterflies are an enchantment as they flutter about like exotic birds, so close that one can reach out and touch them, where a track leads through rainforest to the grave of author E.J. (Ted) Banfield.

At the turn of the century, in bad health, he would come to the tropics to die. Instead, the final 20-odd years of his life were spent on Dunk. His beloved wife Bertha moved away when Ted died, but on her own death was reunited with him on their island paradise.

The headstone that marks their final resting place reads "If a man does not keep pace with his companions it is perhaps because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears" (Henry D. Thoreau).

Small wonder, then, that I began to search out Ted Banfield's books. You can imagine my delight when a couple of years later the "Mate" handed me a copy of "Beachcomber's Paradise — The Tropical Splendour of E.J. Banfield's Queensland" (edited by James G. Porter, published by Angus and Robertson, 1983).

The book contains selections from Banfield's writings, in which his lyrical prose is accompanied by superb photographs. He writes of Umbrella Trees, whose spikes of brilliant red flowers attract ecstatic rainbow lorikeets. These northern native trees make our indoor specimens look like poor relations.

He tells of She-oaks whose "minute scales... shine like gold", and how the wind through the branchlets of these "steadfast harps of the beach" whisper, or are lashed into "sea-like roar".

One learns of the Queensland Upas Tree (*Pisona spp*) whose seed vessels exude a sticky substance that can ensnare unfortunate birds and kill them. And of the Paperbarks which endured a night of "molestation of the wind". In the morning the white bark had been stripped leaving their limbs "naked and bare".

*continued on page 256*



# Churchill Island

*Mary ELLIS finds treasure trove on a small island.*

**F**or the travelling gardener, visiting Churchill Island is like finding treasure trove. It holds fascinating relics of Victoria's history, including a garden which was planted a hundred years ago.

Churchill Island is small, 67 hectares in area, situated in Western Port Bay just off the north east tip of Phillip Island in Victoria. It was originally part of Phillip Island until the sea level rose about 10,000 years ago. Until 1961, when the first bridge was built, the only access to the island was by boat. A new bridge was completed in 1983.

The first European visitor to the island was probably George Bass in 1798. There is a local legend that Bass carved his name into the rock when he discovered Western Port. The foundation stones of the island are soft 50 million year old basalt rocks, which don't withstand water and salt erosion very well. However, the rock with 'Bass' carved in it was sheltered by a cave for many years, so perhaps the marks are his.

The next recorded visitor was James Grant, captain of the *Lady Nelson*, a sloop built specifically to explore the Australian coast. Grant named the island after John Churchill who had given him a variety of seeds, including fruit, vegetables and wheat, before he left England. Grant and his crew cleared a piece of ground on the island and planted the seeds in March 1801. He then returned to England, but the island was visited at the end of that year by the next captain of the *Lady Nelson*, Lieutenant Murray, who reported that the garden had flourished. No one came to look at the garden again for nearly 60 years.

The first recorded residents on the island were the Pickersgill family, who squatted there for many years from 1857. Descendants of this family now live on Phillip Island. In 1866 Churchill Island was purchased by John Rodgers, who built a cottage, which now houses part of the museum. In 1872 the island became the property of the Mayor of Melbourne, Samuel Amess, who built the main house. He planted the Norfolk Island Pine and most of the old garden in the 1890's.

The island changed hands again in 1928 when it was bought by Gerald Buckley. It was farmed by Bob

and Ted Jeffery for Gerald Buckley until he died in 1934. Bob and his wife Edith remained as caretakers until 1936, but at that time during the depression the purchase price of the island, 600 pounds was too great a sum for the Jeffery's. It was later sold to Dr. Jenkins and he built the first bridge connecting the island with Phillip Island in 1961.

In 1976 Churchill Island was purchased for the public under the care of the Victorian Conservation Trust. It is now managed by the Department of Conservation and Environment and is open to the public seven days a week from noon to 5pm. Admission costs \$4.50 for adults. The old homestead buildings are used as a tourist information centre and museum from which there are several walks around the island with plenty of picnic places.

The old garden surrounds the homestead. Many of the trees were planted in 1890 and they are obviously still vigorous and growing well at over 100 years old. The landmark is the Norfolk Island Pine (*Araucaria heterophylla*) in front of the house. Typical of the species this tree is tall, graceful and symmetrical. Underneath it is an equally old Cecil Brunner Rose, accompanied by younger Hydrangeas and Fuchsias. The orchard was planted with numerous fruit trees, including an Olive (*Olea europaea*) with the characteristically gnarled, twisted and hollow trunk. These trees can live to a very great age, so at 100 this specimen is relatively young compared with the olive trees of the Mediterranean. A Mulberry (*Morus alba*) provides widespread shade for the perennials in the garden. The fruits are pale red and inferior to black mulberries for eating. The white mulberry comes from China, where it is grown for its leaves, which are eaten by silkworms. Further from the house, surrounded by the old fruit trees, is a magnificent Bay (*Laurus nobilis*), a species of ancient lineage which has been used as a herb by humans for centuries.

Under the fruit trees, *Acanthus* (*Acanthus mollis*) Penstemons (*Penstemon*) ('Garnet'), Cornflowers (*Centaurea cyanus*) and Red Hot Pokers (*Kniphofia uvaria*) make a colourful display. There are brick edged beds of roses and begonias at the northern end of the ➡



house. To contrast with the colours in the garden, a large flock of white geese patrol the grounds.

Behind the house is a herb garden with a sundial in the centre. It is a very attractive garden, well sheltered between buildings, and has a fine collection of herbs including Borage, Balm, Evening Primroses, Thymes, Oreganos, Comfrey, Nasturtiums, Lavenders, Savouries and Sages.

The whole garden is looked after by a group of volunteers who visit every Friday. The Friends of Churchill Island raise funds for the garden by selling plants to visitors.

To the botanist, the most fascinating trees on the island are the Moonahs. These Mountain Tea-trees (*Melaleuca lanceolata*) are probably about 500 years old and this represents the most easterly point of their distribution in Victoria. The trunks look as though the bark has been plaited and they grow leaning this way or that. When blown over by the wind, these hardy trees re-shoot.

Although much of the island has been cleared in the past for agriculture, a large replanting program since 1977 has re-established Manna, Swamp and Blue

Gums (*Eucalyptus viminalis*, *E.ovata* and *E.globulus*) as well as She-oaks (*Casuarina stricta*) and Moonahs. There are Mangroves (*Avicennia marina*) growing in the intertidal zones around the island.

Bird watchers have opportunities all round the island of seeing wading birds as well as some of the common farmland species. There is a resident population of four Koalas.

Most of us plant our gardens, planning for this season, next year or sometimes a few years hence. We rarely have the opportunity to visit a homestead garden planned and planted a century ago in Australia. Perhaps because Churchill is a small island, the farm and garden have retained a friendly familiar domestic atmosphere. We could all plan gardens on this scale for our grandchildren.



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opposite page (top) Legend has it that George Bass carved his name in this basalt rock in 1798.

(centre) Roses to the north of the house.

(bottom) The herb garden.

Photos M. Ellis

## Harvesting the Bookshelf, continued from page 254

Lawyer canes; the silent "strangler" fig that envelops its host in a fretwork of living lace; mangroves, whose importance in the scheme of things was realised even 100 years ago; butterflies, frogs, birds, ants, the sea; every part of Nature's palette is enthusiastically described. Here indeed was a man who loved Nature in all her many guises. Readers who have an affinity with the tropics and a love of tropical plants, will give this book a special place on their bookshelf.

Some months ago, at a time of great personal loss in my life, my daughter gave me "An Illustrated Gardener's Notebook", illustrated by Juliette Clark and edited by Helen Exley (Exley Publications Ltd, Watford, Herts, 1989).

Endpapers are a delicate field of flowers; the pages are not white, they are a haze of soft greens, mauves and blues. Let this book fall open at any page and it is a joy.. Sensitive coloured drawings of butterflies, flowers, beetles, birds' eggs, and a garden seat are just a few. Even a snail so cute that, if you met it in the garden, you would think twice about stomping on it!

Pages have space for garden notes and contain quotations and short poems about gardens. I think the book is just too exquisite for gardening notes — I'll use it for pictures of different aspects of my garden and for poems I write about the garden and Nature.

Towards the end of last year I decided to convert an unused aviary into a garden room. Just when I'll find time to sit there I don't know, but that is another story.. I envisage it as a shady retreat festooned with creepers. But what to choose?

I consulted Sun Books Series "Climbers and Trailers" (paperback edition 1983, first published in hardback by A.H. and A.W. Reed Ltd). Climbers, sub-climbers, ramblers, trailers and some ground covers comprise the 260 plants described, each illustrated in colour.

Tropical plants and plants for cold regions are to be found here. Some will be recognised as old and reliable friends, even if they have proved to be over exuberant — like sweetly perfumed *Jasminum polyanthum* which covers a wide area very quickly, producing new plants freely when nodes come into contact with the earth.

Fruit Salad Plant (*Monstera deliciosa*) is usually grown as a house plant and can assume alarming proportions in the garden, even in Melbourne. So one has to be flexible about hardness descriptions, as this plant is classed as "tender". Personal observation and experience are invaluable.

There are several pages of roses and clematis, descriptions of hoyas, climbing geraniums, the curious Snail Flower and many others.

Whenever the Gardener's Mate and I travelled north I was besotted by *Pyrostegia venusta*; it would never grow in Melbourne, I was told, but I would gaze at this "impossible dream"; drooping panicles of tubular flowers, flaming orange-scarlet. The one at Olsen's Bird Park on the Gold Coast springs to mind. But it seems it can withstand frosts of minus seven when established; maybe this winter I will bring one home with me.

Although it was published in 1983 a copy of this book can probably be found without too much trouble; I bought mine only a few months ago.









# Lingering for a Lingon

*Gail THOMAS describes some of the unusual edible plants she grows in her own garden.*

*I am constantly asked what I grow in my garden. My answer is usually things which may not be readily seen or available commercially, as I like to experiment with new produce for culinary potential, as well as research for my writing. It is so much easier to relate information after having grown and tasted any fruit or vegetable.*



The obvious question I am then asked is "Such as?" There are a number of red and yellow tomato varieties of different shape and size, rainbow chard, tomatillos and their cousins ground cherries and cape gooseberries, grain amaranth, gem squash, yellow or striped beetroot, red sprouts, Japanese greens and other Oriental vegetables, different types of loose-leaf lettuce, and so the list goes on.

Do I have an orchard? If an apple and a lime constitute an orchard — yes! A vineyard? — one vine! How many hectares is my block. It's 15 x 30 — metres! Take out the house and garage space and it is obvious I have a very small, but productive, garden.

Because I grow a large variety of plants, people assume I have a large area. It is surprising, however, that there is always excess produce to share with friends and to use in experiments in the kitchen. It's just a matter of effectively using the space available.

Of course, some things are only grown once as a trial, and if they don't meet expectations — in the garden or on the plate — the options are open to look for alternatives. There are others which are regularly planted, and have become favourites, while others still are more permanent than seasonal. Containers are also useful for small plants such as a mesclun salad mix

which can be quickly grown and simply harvested with a pair of scissors, or for some colourful (and edible) gem marigolds. There are other flowers in the garden such as roses, violets, borage and lavender which also find their way onto the dinner plate.

Marionberries and thornless loganberries are trained along the fence, while some white currants are planted in front of these. Nesturtiums run along in front of the currants, as their leaves, flowers and green seeds, pickled as capers, all provide culinary potential.

The *Myrtus communis*, whose aromatic leaves are used in the same way as bay leaves, is flanked by a bed used for vegetable crops, and "catnip corner" where one of the Ginger Thomas boys can sometimes be found slightly intoxicated from sniffing leaves!

Another favourite is *Myrtus ugni* with its delicious, tiny strawberry flavoured red berries. It is sometimes known as Chilean guava. This erect evergreen shrub with small dark green, glossy foliage, also makes a useful hedge, as it somewhat resembles box. It is frost tolerant and will succeed in most soils if kept moist, and with some shade and protection from winds.

In his extremely informative book, "The Complete Book of Fruit

Growing in Australia" (Lothian), Dr Louis Glowinski writes of this plant's history, cultural requirements and culinary potential, and says that jam made from the ugni fruit was a favourite of Queen Victoria. Personally, I have found when cooking or freezing fruit the mouthfilling burst of flavour one gets from the fresh fruit is considerably diminished. The fruit has the most intense flavour when it lightens in colour to pink and swells slightly, and as the stems begin to brown. I often shake the bush gently and harvest the fallen ripened fruit, or only pick those berries which come away from the plant without too much resistance to touch.

While Jerusalem artichokes have also been a "must" in the garden, a more recent addition, which grows in a similar manner, is the Yacon (*Polymnia edulis*). I was given a tuber to plant, and have gradually increased my crop over the last few years. I have never seen this plant offered for sale.

The yacon originates from South America where the tubers are eaten as a vegetable and fermented to make alcohol from the stored inulin. The whole plant is also used as livestock feed.

Yacon have large, green, triangular, spade-shaped leaves, and the plant will grow to around 150-160cm high. It produces yellow,



daisy-like flowers in late summer/early autumn, and is dug when the plant dies back in winter. The elongated tubers, which resemble dahlias, can vary considerably in size, from large, sweet potato size down to some which are the thickness of a slender chilli. Inside the thin, light brown skin, is a crisp, juicy, almost translucent flesh having a texture similar to water chestnut, which can be eaten raw, or prepared and cooked in any way you would for potatoes or Jerusalem artichokes.

The delicate refreshing flavour and crispy texture when raw would make yacon an excellent addition to salads, or cooked in stir-fry dishes, or as I sometimes like to serve it cut into chips and fried as a vegetable accompaniment.

And what haven't I successfully grown? Capers, for one have not suc-

ceeded, but the nasturtium alternative poses no problem.

commercially, a helicopter is used to harvest the fruit, the wind from it blowing the berries from the plant so they can be easily collected. I have not bothered to replace my lost plant.

The lingonberry (*Vaccinium vitis-idaea*) however, grew quite well, Native to Europe, it is also known as Alpine or Mountain Cranberry, or Cowberry. It is a low-growing evergreen with glossy leaves, reaching a height of 25cm with a spread of around one metre. It prefers a well-drained, acid soil in a partially shaded to shady area. It is frost resistant, but drought tender.

Lingonberries are a favourite in Scandinavian countries, being a traditional accompaniment to Swedish meatballs, with the fruit being incorporated into the sauce. As well as being suitable for savoury dishes, they can also be used as a jam or in

berries as jars of preserved fruit. However, Woodbank Nursery in Tasmania had them listed in their catalogue so I immediately purchased some plants. They are tolerant of colder conditions and do quite well in Tasmania where a plant at the nursery has colonised an old tree-fern trunk lying on the ground. Obviously, this is a suitable environment, as the plant does produce fruit there.

In spring and summer, clusters of delicate bell-shaped flowers appear, which are pinkish white in colour. The small, bright red berries which follow are quite sharp and acidic in taste, and lend well to being cooked rather than consumed fresh.

I have placed my plants in various positions around the garden, but find the growth has been better when they are left in a pot. I was quite excited when the plants first flowered, and was waiting with great anticipation for my first taste experience of the fresh fruit. However, this did not eventuate as the plants did not set fruit. Perhaps southern Victoria is not cold enough, and they need a climate like Tasmania, or perhaps it's my lack of gardening expertise. Whatever, I am still lingering for a lingon!



(opposite page) Gail Thomas with some of the fruits and vegetables she grows in her garden.

(left) Lingon flowers

(below) A Yacon plant



ceded, but the nasturtium alternative poses no problem.

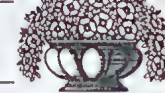
Some years ago I purchased a cranberry and a lingonberry plant. The cranberry grew very slowly — no need to rush out to order the Christmas turkey! — and eventually died. Someone told me in the USA, when they are grown in wet areas

dessert applications. Another Swedish favorite, particularly when served with ice cream as a Christmas specialty are Cloudbberries (*Rubus chamaemorus*), again preferring cold climates, but I have yet to discover any plants in Australia.

Until a few years ago I had only ever been able to purchase lingon-





**GARDEN MARKET PLACE**

is an important directory for quick reference, and headings can be selected by arrangement.

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**NURSERIES — GENERAL**

**WIRREANDA NURSERY**, 169 Wirreanda Rd, Ingleside, NSW 2101. Tel (02) 450.1400. Top quality, super value trees and shrubs, ferns and indoor plants direct from the grower. Stunning assortment of Australian natives and exotics to choose from, including many species rare and unusual. Turn off Mona Vale Road at Tumburra St, Ingleside, and follow signs to the nursery. Open 7 days.

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**TUMBLERS GREEN** for old garden roses and flowers our forefathers grew. Midland Highway, Creswick, Vic. 3363. Tel (053) 45.2797. Large country garden and nursery selling roses, lavenders, herbs, hedge plants, perennials and ground covers. Hardy trees and shrubs, medlars, quinces, mulberries etc. Arches, arbours and pots. CLOSED TUESDAYS. Luncheon and afternoon tea. Groups welcome.

**RELIABLE ROSES**, George Rd, Silvan Vic. 3795. Tel (03) 737.9313. Melways map 121 D10. Growers and specialists of Heritage roses. Personalised growing service on request November to March. Roses available year round, mail order in winter only. Display area of over 800 varieties of all types of roses. Catalogue available \$2.00 post paid.

**ROSS ROSES**, St Andrew's Tce (PO Box 23), Willunga, SA 5172. Tel (085) 56.2555. Office hours 9 to 5, Saturdays 9 to noon. Public display garden always open, 1000 varieties including 600 "heritage" roses. Hardy, field-grown roses supplied direct throughout Australia. Informative catalogue available, send 2 x 43 cent stamps.

**TOWNHEAD HERBS** 5 Townhead Cr, Singleton, NSW 2330. Nursery supplying herbs and perennial plants, shrubs and heritage roses. 1 acre display gardens and gift shop. Open Thurs to Sun. Opposite Charbonnier Motel. Groups by appointment please. Tel (065)72.1315.

**RAINBOW RIDGE NURSERY** 8 Taylor's Rd, Dural, NSW 2158. Tel (02) 651.2857. Iris and daylilies. Colour catalogue with 106 colour plates available for \$3.00 posted (refunded on first order). Latest iris from Australia and USA; Bearded, Median, Louisiana, Japanese, Evansias, species and water iris. Large range of tetraploid and diploid daylilies. Main bloom period Oct, Nov and Dec.

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**OTWAY HERBS COTTAGE GARDEN**; biodynamic nursery and terraced garden set in the hills of Apollo Bay. Perennials, shrubs, rare plants, fresh herbs, pot-pourri, local terracotta pottery. Biddles Rd, Apollo Bay, Vic. 3233. Tel (052)37.6318. Open daily.

**THE OLD RECTORY GARDEN AND ANTIQUES**, 62 Wilson St, Braidwood, NSW 2622. Tel (048)42.2057. Cottage garden shrubs and old-fashioned roses and a wide variety of perennials.

**COX'S ROSE NURSERY**, 140 Oaks Rd, Thirlmere, NSW 2572. Tel (046)81.8560, specialise in growing species, old garden, climbing and Australian bred roses in pots. Over 400 varieties listed. Send for catalogue — 1992 catalogue available October 1991. New season stock available March 1992. Custom budding service between mid-December and March. Nursery and exhibition garden open Thurs to Sun 9 am to 5 pm. Main garden flowering mid-October to end November.

**BIRCHFIELD HERBS**, Turallo Terrace, Bungendore, NSW 2621. Tel (06)238.1446. Historic Victorian cottage set in rambling old-world gardens. Large formal herb garden. Wide range of herbs and cottage garden perennials grown on premises. Pot-pourris, herb vinegars, jams and jellies, seeds, etc. Cottage and herb gardens designed. Open Thurs to Sun 9 am to 5 pm.

**HILLTOP COTTAGE NURSERY AND ROSE FARM** offers a large collection of heritage roses and perennials on display in our extensive gardens and available for purchase from our nurseries or by mail order. Shicer Gully Rd, Guildford 3451, near Castlemaine; tel (054)73.4275.

**AFRICAN VIOLETS**; leaves, plantlets, mature plants, wide range of varieties; potting mix, wicks, nutrients, range of ceramic pots. Inspection invited. Southern African Violets, 133 Southern Road, Bargo, NSW 2574; tel (046)84.1868.

**JASPER PARK NURSERY**, 878 Croziers Rd, Berry, NSW 2535. Tel (044)64.1097. Rare and unusual trees and shrubs. Heritage roses and perennials, plus wide range of natives. Stroll through 1.6 ha garden or browse in our craft and gift shop. Coaches welcome. Closed Tues and Wed except by appointment.

**ORCHARD COTTAGE PERENNIALS**. Specializing in Dianthus, Pinks, perennials and old-fashioned roses. Tucks Rd, Main Ridge, Vic. Melway map 190 F12. Closed Friday and Sunday. Tel (059)89.6265.

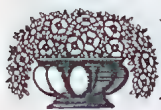
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**AUSTRAL WATER GARDENS**; water lilies, all colours and types; water iris; marginal and oxygenating plants; books; pond liners economy \$8 sq.m — EPDM synthetic rubber from \$16 sq.m. Send 3 x 45cent stamps for colour mail order list. 1295 Pacific Highway, Cowan, NSW 2081. Open 7 days. 3 km north of Cowan. Tel (02)985.7370.

**SWEET VIOLETS**; by mail order only. Offered is a selection of 16 different violets, single and double for \$29.00 post free, or send SSAE and ask for a list of named and species violets, including the "Apricot" violet. Violet Gardens WA, PO Box 45, Armadale, WA 6112.

**BLEAK HOUSE ROSES**; Calder Highway, Malmsbury, Vic, 3446. Tel: (054) 232427. Open Tues. to Sun. 10am to 5pm. The garden at Bleak House has one of the finest collections of old roses in the country. The nursery specialises in the sale of roses and perennials, and an interesting range of garden ornament. A rose catalogue is available, \$2.50 posted, and we welcome mail orders, to be sent in June, July, and August. The bookshop stocks a wide range of gardening books, and a selection of gifts.





**CLOYNE NURSERY**, Rose Valley Road, Cooma 2630. Phone (064) 52 1063. Specialising in Heritage Roses, providing an efficient mail order service. Also geraniums, hardy perennials and cottage garden plants. Our display gardens open to public view. Rose catalogues available — \$3.00. Buses and clubs welcome.

**MOUNTAIN VIEW DAYLILY NURSERY** offers the largest collection of imported day-lilies in Australia at the fairest prices. Our superb 28 page colour catalogue featuring 135 beautiful colour plates is \$4.00 posted (Deductable from first order.) Box 458J, Maleny QLD. 4552. Phone (074) 942 346.

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**BLEAK HOUSE BOOKSHOP.** Calder Highway, Malmsbury. Vic. 3446. Tel: (054) 232427. Horticultural books, gifts, home produce, etc. Coffee and tea always available. Mail order welcome. Open Tues. to Sun. 10am to 5pm.

## GARDEN DETAIL

**WEATHERVANES** add charm and distinction to your home. WINVANE will provide a practical and sure weather guide, and is an ideal gift for family or friends. Write or phone for your free brochure to WINVANE, 53 Hampton St, Hurstville Grove, NSW 2220. Tel (02) 579.6649.

**SUNDIALS** of quality and distinction, specially made for any given location. Some Bowral and Sydney dials now in stock. Contact Australian Garden Journal during office hours on (048)61.4999 (we are NSW and ACT agent); for other States ring (08)49.8774 after hours.

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**GARDEN OF ST ERTH, BLACKWOOD** 95 km north-west of Melbourne. Wide variety of native and exotic plants in 3ha bush setting. Open daily. Official collection of Cistaceae. Contains herb, rock, water, vegetable, bush, 'English' and sunken gardens.

**ASHCOMBE MAZE**, a large hedge maze, rose maze, gardens and tea rooms. Open weekends, public holidays and Victorian Government School holidays, 10 am to 5 pm. Red Hill Rd, Shoreham, on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula. Tel (059)89.8387. Melway ref 256E4.

**GARDEN OPEN — BRAIDWOOD.** Don't miss visiting the Mona Garden this Spring. The garden will be open for five week-ends, commencing 2nd Oct. 1992. Look for further details in next Journal. Group bookings/enquiries (048) 422 384

**SPRING GARDEN TOURS:** 10 days in South Australia from Wed 14th Oct to Fri 23rd Oct, to precede the AGHS Conference in Adelaide; \$1695. 6 days in Mudgee, Cassilis, Coolah region from Fri 29th Oct to Wed 4th Nov; \$690. Prices ex Sydney. Other places quoted on request. Details from John Morris Heritage Explorers, 13 Simmons St, Balmain, NSW 2041; tel (02)810.2565; fax (02)818.2748.

**SUNNYBRAE** is a new country restaurant on the Cape Otway Road, 1 km out of Birregurra on the way to Lorne. We specialise in Sunday lunch; the meal begins with a selection of entrees (served banquet-style) that feature local produce in light interesting combinations. This follows with a choice from five main courses and coffee, \$25. Desserts and cheeses an extra \$8. The Dining Room, built onto an 1868 cottage, has a bright informal atmosphere. The garden surrounds are perfect to wander between courses; see Garden Journal article March/April 1992. Cnr Cape Otway and Lorne Roads, Birregurra, 3242; tel (053)36.2276.

## ACCOMMODATION

**LINKS HOUSE, BOWRAL** Contemporary Australian cuisine with a zap of French. Dinner, Bed and Breakfast \$85 to \$115 per person, Weekend package \$170 per person. (048)61.1977.

**TASMANIA**, "Hillgrove", colonial self-contained suite in historic house c.1840 on 11 acres of rolling countryside overlooking historic Shot Tower and Derwent River. 15 minutes from Hobart GPO. \$75.00 double per day includes full breakfast provisions. Tel (002)27.9043

**ST IVES COTTAGE**, Blackwood (75 mins from Melbourne) at Garden of St Erth, set in the Wombat State Forest. Bush walks, drives to outstanding gardens and historic towns in Central Highlands. Weekends or weekly let. Sleeps 5 plus. Enquiries (053)68.6649.

**DAYLESFORD;** A charming country cottage fully self-contained, located in a peaceful, private setting, situated high on Wombat Hill. Well equipped for 2-4, heating (c/h & log fires) and linen included. Set amid a delightful cottage garden the backgate leads into the Daylesford Historical Botanical Gardens and the stunning Convent Gallery. Telephone (053) 487 679 for bookings and brochure.

**HISTORIC BRAIDWOOD;** visit old world gardens and stay at the DONCASTER GUEST HOUSE; superb food and intimate atmosphere in former convent. \$130 for 2, dinner, bed and breakfast. Tel (048)42.2356.

**THE WALDORF, BATHURST.** Yesteryear's old-fashioned charm with modern comfort. Early settlers self-contained cottage built largely of pressed mud. Open fire. Beautiful rural views. Peaceful and private. Close to Jenolan and Abercrombie Caves. Please phone (063)37.5720 for rental details.

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**BERRIMA LODGE,** Delightful bed & breakfast on 5 acres. Adjoining Berrima village and its restaurants, antique shops and museums. Full English breakfast, open fire lounge, wide verandahs. Phone (048) 771 000 for brochure or details

**MOUNT MACEDON:** Country house bed and breakfast at 'Dreamthorpe' (circa 1890), surrounded by 10 acres of romantic woodland garden and nestled at the foot of Mount Macedon, famous for its historic hill station gardens. Tours of other gardens and specialist nurseries can also be arranged. Tel: (054)26.1735.

## SCHOOLS

**COURSES,** 14 options: herbs, cottage gardens, landscaping, propagation, hydroponics, roses, orchids, flowers, fuchsias, crops, nursery, horses, business, photography, journalism, etc. Hobby, Certificate, Diploma. Australian Horticultural Correspondence School, PO Box 2092, Nerang East, Qld 4211 or 264 Swansea Rd, Lilydale, Vic. 3140. Tel (075)30.4855; (03) 736.1882.



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS, Home & Overseas

## AUGUST

**8th to 11th Aug:** Hardware and Garden Show, Royal Exhibition Centre, Wayville, SA. Enquiries Geoff Millard, Exhibitions and Trade Fairs Pty Ltd, 6 Grenfell St, Kent Town, SA 5067; tel (08) 362.9966; fax (08) 362.9994.

**15th Aug to 4th Oct:** 7th Annual Daffodil Festival (in conjunction with Australian Daffodil Society), The Rhododendron Garden, Olinda, Vic. Open daily 10am to 4.30pm.

**19th Aug:** OPCA Subscribers' Group AGM, including lecture "A Wealth of Antipodean Plants for OPCA Collections" by Rodger Elliot, and plant auction.

**22nd and 23rd Aug:** Wattle Time Garden Fair, Cootamundra, NSW. Enquiries (069) 42.1400.

**23rd Aug:** Herbs and Spices Festival, Vacluse House, Sydney; 10.00am to 4.30pm.

**30th Aug to 1st Sept:** GAFA International Garden Fair, Koln, Germany.

## SEPTEMBER

**1st to 4th Sept:** International Geranium Conference, Hans Christian Anderson Centre, Odense, Fyn, Denmark

**1st Sept to 30th Nov:** Rhododendron Floral Festival (includes the Rhododendron Grand Show from 31st Oct to 3rd Nov in conjunction with the Australian Rhododendron Society), The Rhododendron Garden, Olinda, Vic. Open daily 10am to 4.30pm (to 5.30pm daylight saving).

**3rd to 13th Sept:** Kyneton Daffodil and Arts Festival, Kyneton, Vic. Enquiries (054)22.3060 or (054)22.1183.

**4th to 6th Sept:** Holmesglen TAFE Spring Garden Festival, Waverley Campus, Waverley Rd, Waverley, Vic. Enquiries Peter Brown or Scott Bolton (03)579.2499.

**10th to 27th Sept:** "The Art of Botanical Illustration"; exhibition in the Hall of the National Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra. Entrance \$2. Enquiries (03) 755.1467.

**17th to 19th Sept:** Australasian Native Orchid Conference, Toowoomba, Qld. Enquiries Box 2141, Toowoomba, 4350.

**18th to 27th Sept:** Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers, Toowoomba, Qld. Enquiries Toowoomba Events Corporation Ltd, PO Box 3179 Town Hall, Toowoomba, 4350; tel (076) 32.4877.

**19th Sept to 18th Oct:** Floriade, Canberra's Spring Festival. Enquiries (008) 020.144.

**20th to 23rd Sept:** Evenement Jardin, Paris-Nord Exhibition Centre, Paris (incorporates Jarditec (tools and products for leisure gardening, Simavar (garden machinery) and Decorvert (garden furniture and outdoor decoration)).

**24th to 27th Sept:** Plantec International Horticultural Trades Fair, Frankfurt, Germany.

**25th to 28th Sept:** Third Australian International Herb Conference, Brisbane Boys' College, Kensington Terrace, Toowong, Qld. Enquiries Mrs Barbara Wickes, 26 Ripicola Place, Chapel Hill, Qld 4069; tel (07) 378.2075.

**26th Sept to 5th Oct:** Tulip Time Festival, Bowral, NSW. Enquiries Bowral Tulip Time Office, PO Box 176 Bowral, 2576, tel (048) 61.3133 or Mittagong Visitors Centre (048) 71.2888.

**26th to 27th Sept and 3rd to 5th Oct:** Mid Mountains Garden Festival, Blue Mountains, NSW. Enquiries Lindsay McLeod (047) 58.6574.

**30th Sept to 3rd Oct:** Conference "The Culture of Landscape Architecture, EDGE TOO", organised by students from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and the University of Melbourne. Enquiries to the Convenors, Landscape Architecture Students Conference, Faculty of Environmental Design and Construction, RMIT, GPO Box 2476V, Melbourne, 3001; or School of Environmental Planning, University of Melbourne, Parkville, 3052.

## OCTOBER

**3rd and 4th Oct:** Australasian Native Orchid Society (Victorian Group) Show, National Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra.

**10th Oct:** Australian Geranium Society Spring Show, St Andrews Church Hall, Roseville, NSW. Enquiries Mrs V. Butters (02) 817.3594.

**10th and 11th Oct:** Bilpin Garden Club Spring Show, Bilpin Hall, Bells Line of Road, Bilpin, NSW. Enquiries (045) 67.2148.

**10th to 18th Oct:** Leura Spring Garden Festival, Leura NSW: nine gardens open. Enquiries Bill Jensen (047) 82.2363.

**11th and 18th Oct:** High Country Gardening School, Old Brewery Hotel, Goulburn, NSW. Enquiries F. Reynolds (048) 49.4444

**16th — 19th Oct:** Berry Gardens Festival, Berry NSW. Ten gardens open for inspection. Enquiries Judy Forbes (044) 64.2313 or Nancy Bevan (044) 64.1586.

**17th and 18th Oct:** "The Romance of the Rose": a weekend of talks and garden visits, Singleton, NSW. Enquiries (065) 72.1315 or (065) 77.3139.

**31st Oct and 1st Nov:** Cassilis Open Gardens Weekend. Six gardens open with lunch and refreshments available as well as garden stalls and plant sales. Enquiries Winks Armstrong (063) 76.1163 or Anne Reynolds (065) 48.7218.

**30th Oct to 8th Nov:** Castlemaine State Festival, Castlemaine, Vic. Enquiries PO Box 230 Castlemaine, 3450.

**30th Oct to 22nd Nov:** Blackheath Rhododendron Festival, Blackheath NSW. Enquiries (047) 87.7695.

**Last week in Oct:** Kambalda Spring Garden Competition, Kambalda WA.

## NOVEMBER

**12th — 14th Nov:** Bowral Gardentour: visit gardens not normally open to the public. Accommodation arranged. Enquiries Keva North (048) 61.4999 or (048) 61.1884 (a/h).

**13th — 22nd Nov:** Beechworth Garden Festival, Beechworth, Vic. Open gardens, lectures, workshops, theme dinners and art exhibitions. Enquiries Lyn McCure, 42 Camp St, Beechworth, Vic 3747.

**14th to 15th Nov:** 1992 Blumenfest, Hahndorf, SA. Enquiries (08) 388.6126 or (08) 388.7247.

**15th Nov:** OPCA Spring Tour to Cornus Collection, Stephen Ryan's Dicksonia Rare Plants at Mount Macedon, and the Australian Rose Collection of Susan Irvine at Gisborne.

News items for inclusion in "Calendar of Events, Home & Overseas" must reach our editorial office by letter or fax no less than seven weeks before the first day of the month of issue.





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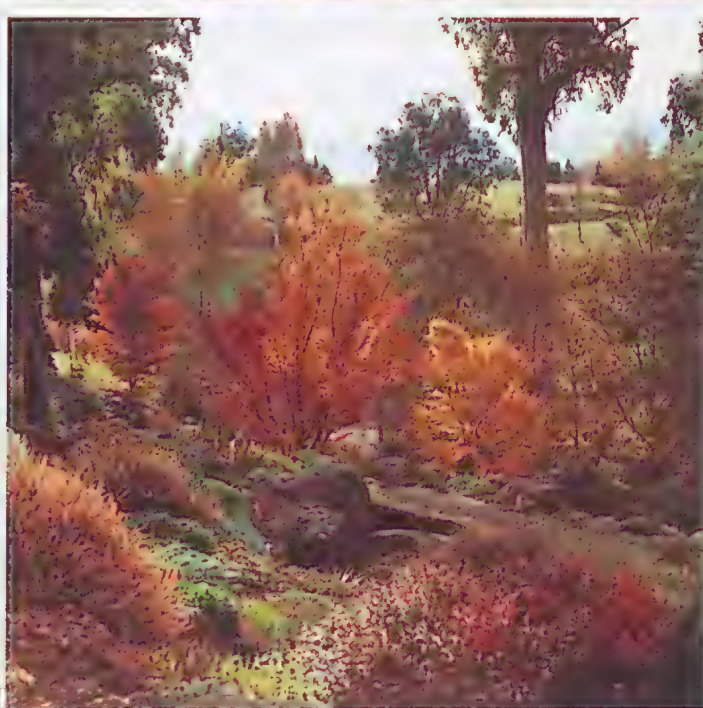
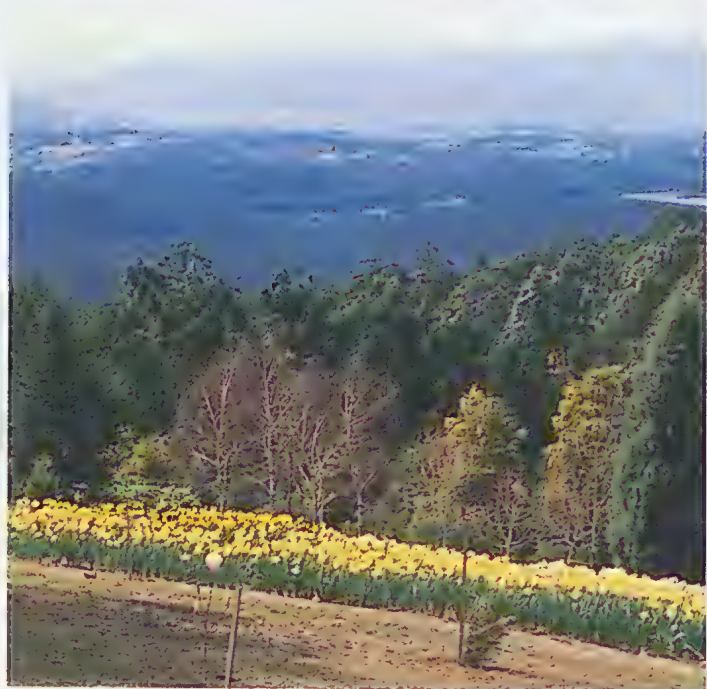
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